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ABSTRACT

As part of the second phase of a two-phase study of the condition and needs of the live professional theatre in America since the mid-1960's, this volume provides four round table discussions involving 22 theatre persons from around the country who were drawn together to share their perceptions of the needs of professional theatre. The first discussion concerns what the participants perceived to be the present role of professional theatre in American society today--what it is, not what it should be. The second discussion covers what the participants thought the role of professional theatre in America should be. This is followed by a discussion of what needs to be implemented in order to attain what should be. The fourth discussion turns to perceptions of where funding might or should come from in order to implement the perceived needs. In the final discussion, each participant was asked, based on the previous discussions, to stress what he or she perceived to be the most important needs of and for theatre in the immediate future. It is emphasized throughout all the discussions that every effort was made to identify particular needs of the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors of the professional theatre and to identify where needs overlap or are actually or potentially cooperative in nature. (HOD)

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EXHIBIT VOLUME II

MATHTECH

The Technical Research
and Consulting Division of
Mathematica, Inc.

CS504063

INTRODUCTION

During two of its meetings with MATHTECH, the Advisory Group expressed a strong interest in having individual input from professionals in the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors of professional theatre into Phase I of the study. As a result, Advisory Panel Chairman Harold Prince invited approximately thirty theatre persons from around the country to participate in round table discussions to share their perceptions of the needs of professional theatre. Two discussions were held in New York and two in Los Angeles. Each was scheduled to last three hours. Although the time was short between receipt of the letters of invitation and the dates of the meetings, the following twenty-two invitees were able to participate.

October 18, 1977: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon -- New York City

Richard Barr, President, League of New York Theatres
John Bos, Director of Performing Arts, New York State Arts Council
Michael Feingold, Critic
Bernard Gersten, Co-Producer, New York Shakespeare Festival
David LeVine, Executive Director, Dramatists Guild
Stephen Schwartz, Composer
Douglas Turner Ward, Artistic Director, Negro Ensemble Company
Thomas Fichandler, Managing Director, Arena Stage

October 18, 1977: 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. -- New York City

Emanuel Azenberg, Producer
Earle Gister, Director, Leonard Davis Center for the Performing Arts
Stuart Ostrow, Producer
Jane Alexander, Actress

October 20, 1977: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon -- Los Angeles

Alvin Epstein, Artistic Director, Guthrie Theatre
Robert Goldsby, Artistic Director, Berkeley Stage
Mako Iwamatsu, Director, East/West Theatre
Dan Sullivan, Critic
Marl Young, American Federation of Musicians

October 20, 1977: 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. -- Los Angeles

Arthur Ballet, Office for Advanced Drama Research, University of Minnesota
Pat Don Aroma, IATSE
Stanley Eichelbaum, Critic
Jorge Huarte, Director
W. Duncan Ross, Artistic Director, Seattle Repertory Theatre

Each round table discussion was moderated by Advisory Group member Robert W. Crawford and each was attended by Robert J. Anderson and Sonia P. Maltezou of MATHTECH. In addition, Harold Horowitz of the National Endowment for the Arts participated in part of the afternoon discussion on October 18th in New York. Each round table discussion was transcribed in full by a court stenographer. Complete, unedited versions of the discussions are available at the National Endowment for the Arts.

To given structure to the discussions and to provide opportunity for response to similar questions, the following format was followed in each of the four meetings. Participants discussed first what they perceived to be the present role of professional theatre in American society today - what it is, not what it should be. This was followed by ideas and discussions of what each participant perceived should be the role of professional theatre in America. In turn, this was followed by discussion of needs to be implemented in order to attain what should be. The fourth area of discussion turned to perceptions of where funding might or should come from in order to implement the perceived needs. Finally, each participant was asked, based on the discussion already held, to stress what he or she perceived to be the most important needs of and for theatre in the immediate future. Every effort was made throughout all discussions to identify particular needs of the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors of the professional theatre and to identify where needs overlapped or were actually or potentially cooperative in nature. So as not to "load" the discussions, the moderator posed as few detailed or specific questions as possible, doing so only when necessary to provide sharper focus through clarification of points being made.

Initially, it had been planned to prepare a precis of the discussions, including a somewhat limited number of direct quotes extracted from the transcripts. Because of the wealth of material and the serious response to our appeal for in-depth comment from varied professional points of view, the original plan was discarded. The following much fuller excerpts are presented after minimal editing by the moderator. Much valuable material about the perceptions of what theatre is today, is included in conversations dealing with what theatre should be. If such sections of the discussions were taken out of context, their particular pertinence might well be diminished, if not lost. Each round table had its own dynamic. Each dynamic proved to be an integral part of the statements of perceptions. To divorce these statements from the dynamic of the whole, by extracting them out of context, would be unfair to the participants.

The Advisory Group and MATHTECH are deeply indebted to the twenty-two individuals who managed to free themselves to participate in these discussions. That they were willing to do so at such short notice is evidence of the deep seriousness and concern they have for the future of professional theatre in this country.

THEATRE RESEARCH PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

ROUND TABLE

October 18, 1977 -- 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

The League of New York Theatres and Producers

New York, New York

PARTICIPANTS:

Richard Barr, President, League of New York Theatres
John Bos, Director of Performing Arts, New York State Arts Council
Michael Feingold, Critic
Bernard Gersten, Co-Producer, New York Shakespeare Festival
David LeVine, Executive Director, Dramatists Guild
Stephen Schwartz, Composer
Douglas Turner Ward, Artistic Director, Negro Ensemble Company
Thomas Fichandler, Managing Director, Arena Stage

MODERATOR:

Robert W. Crawford

PRESENT:

Robert J. Anderson, Jr.
Sonia P. Maltezou

MODERATOR: Dick, from your point of view, what is the present role of for-profit and not-for-profit theatre in American society today?

MR. BARR: Well, that's a hard way to start. I would like to define the nature, the difference of theatre to other performing arts. I would like to start there.

The difference between theatre and the other performing arts is that the theatre is the only one that is not subsidized totally. Every other form of performing art is subsidized. The theatre, because it had its beginnings in a commercial sense way, way back, even in 1730, 1750, when we first began doing plays in the United States, it was always a commercial situation.

Many, many years later, without trying to go into the history of it, the other arts began to come up, the other performing arts, that is, the symphonies and the dance and the concert attractions and other performing areas. The only one that remained commercial and still is commercial to a great extent is the theatre. And this is its essential problem, as I see it. You say, what is the commercial theatre today? What is the professional theatre is what you asked.

As far as I'm concerned, the professional theatre is the most important statement in the arts that the country has. This has generally been true of great moments in great nations. Certainly true of France during the time of Corneille, Racine and Moliere. Certainly true of the Shakespearian period: Johnson, Shakespeare and so forth. And it was even true of England during the Victorian era. It is probably true of us now. And the fact that our plays, regardless of whether they come from Broadway, Off Broadway, regional or whatever, are the ones that are most sought in the world, puts us strangely enough in the position of Athens. Now, this may sound very grandiose, but I'm trying to make it simple and specific.

That is my feeling of where the professional theatre is today. It is the statement of the American people in its highest form of art.

MR. GERSTEN: Dick has latched on to something that is very, very crucial, it seems to me, in noting right straight in the beginning that in the performing arts the theatre is the only one with the capability of operating without subsidy and, not only that, but operating with profit.

And that is an anomoly that I have been keenly aware of in the years I have been working in the theatre because I have been a witness and party to the transition of the totally private theatre -- I mean, in my early days there was no non-profit theatre. It just began to appear early, early on when I got my Equity card. So, I have seen the evolution to the level that they have at the present time.

I think a key thing to get for the record and to acknowledge right now perhaps is, since we have cut out our area as the professional theatre, that is a good chunk of the universe we are talking about, to define it in terms of how big is the non-profit theatre and how big is the commercial theatre. And they are easy numbers. I don't have them, but they are readily available.

Because it seems to me they are defined in terms of their GNP, the gross national product of the two sectors.

I certainly have been aware of the creeping up of the non-profit theatre to the level of the commercial theatre. And then somewhere in the course of the discussions that are taking place, the relationship of these two sectors, the thing that you have called for, how do they relate and where does the future lie in relationship to the profit and non-profit.

MR. BOS: We are already talking money and not the essential root of the issue. The point -- I mean a footnote must be added to Richard's statement that theatre is subsidized to a degree. I think what you mean it is not -- theatre as a total landscape -- it is not funded to the degree of --

But the very problem Richard cites is also the problem of the non-profit theatre. Non-profit theatres have a difficult time raising money from a non-informed public because of the confusion that exists that Broadway makes money. Lincoln Center's problem is that -- no one questions the need of the Metropolitan Opera or the New York City Ballet or the New York City Opera for needing subsidy, but they obviously question it for the theatre, The Beaumont.

MR. FICHANDLER: I think there is another point that I would like to take off on that Richard started and that is this question of elitism which I think we have to meet head on and handle properly the way the story in The Times did the other day, because when you are talking professional theatre, you are talking about that part of the theatre that is really setting the standards and leading as opposed to all other kinds of theatre, all populist theatre and so on.

I think it is very important that that theatre be supported in whatever way possible because that is the theatre that really is the important element in terms of this whole analysis that we are doing.

Theatre is the finest expression of the theatrical enterprise in this country and, therefore, should be looked at separately from the populist theatre entirely.

MR. FEINGOLD: I find a certain number of half-truths sliding in here which I would like to clarify if I can.

First of all, I don't think it is completely true that the theatre is the only art that is not totally subsidized. We have something in this country called commercial music, popular music, rock music, Musack, it pays its own way; whereas classical music, which many millions of people in this country like, would disappear if it weren't subsidized. I think that should be underlined.

There are such things as film and television. It's possible -- Dick works in the theatre and does not consider them art forms.

MR. BARR: Correct.

MR. FEINGOLD: They are certainly mainly commercial. I can't answer for television, but film has produced a few good things. They pay their own way.

There are also certain relationships to the theatre of those two art forms that affect the financial picture and the artistic opportunities of the theatre. We might talk about that later on. So again, Bernie repeated that the theatre is the only art capable of operating without subsidy. This is also something I question.

MR. GERSTEN: What you are saying is absolutely true.

MR. FEINGOLD: I'm not sure that Broadway in its present state is a demonstration that the theatre is capable of operating without subsidy. Broadway is subsidized by TDF at this point, by the half-price ticket booth -- and, incidentally, there has always been some arrangement of that kind in the history of Broadway for unloading slow-moving tickets.

Secondly, we are now at a point in history where Broadway is to a certain extent subsidized by the non-profit resident theatres which are supplying all of the material and doing all of the pre-Broadway work that used to be done by Broadway producers and out-of-town try-outs.

MR. BARR: Or Off Broadway.

MR. FICHANDLER: Well, what is the year after year, the record of losses and gains in total on Broadway?

MR. BARR: Generally gain.

MR. FICHANDLER: Not loss?

MR. GERSTEN: Gain of what?

MR. BARR: Money.

MR. FICHANDLER: More money made than lost year after year?

MR. FEINGOLD: If you throw everything in together.

MR. BARR: We are going to have a report of our own. The League is preparing a report to justify that statement.

MR. FICHANDLER: Still, despite that, it is true that many Broadway productions are subsidized by people putting money in who don't care too seriously if they lose it for tax purposes.

MR. BARR: I don't consider that subsidy.

MR. FICHANDLER: Well, it's a kind of subsidy.

MR. SCHWARTZ: See, here's what's happening. I thought it was going to happen. You read your list of priorities. We are immediately blurring the first two questions and you can't help but do it.

You see, I think when Mr. Barr spoke, what he was really talking about was what the function of theatre should be. It's not at all what the function of professional theatre is; certainly not what the function of the Broadway theatre is right now.

The function of the Broadway theatre right now, in general -- and I don't see that it has any other choice, and that is why we are here today -- the simple function of the Broadway theatre right now is to produce shows that make money. It is not at all to lead the public or to have an art form or anything like that. And the primary consideration of doing a show on Broadway -- again I say in general, not exclusively, but in general -- must be to put on a show that makes money.

This is somewhat different than the case of the regional theatres. And it is precisely for that reason that the regional theatres have become our leaders as Mr. Feingold points out in providing new impetus for, if you want to refer to it as art or craft or whatever, for what the theatre, in fact, should be doing.

It seems to me that what this entire discussion is about is to see how we can make it more possible for the regional theatres to continue doing that, and how we can make it possible for other people who are not involved with the regional theatres or don't have the ability or whatever to become involved with the regional theatres, to also do something with at least one eye towards the artistic instead of having to concentrate so heavily on commercial success.

Mr. Fichandler and I are involved right now in a project which later on we can get specific about which, I think, illustrates exactly this problem; the amount of rigmarole that we've had to go through, close to chicanery, to get this project to happen simply because it could not happen under existing commercial systems. It's just incredible.

MR. BARR: I think it would be very difficult to argue against the point that the purpose of the Broadway theatre is to produce shows that make money. On the other hand, I do not agree at all that the regional theatre is the fountain of experimental ideas. Finally, after twenty-five years, some of them began doing new plays.

There is no playwright I know, of any serious importance, who does not wish eventually to be seen in what I call the marketplace. There is no creative artist working that I know in any aspect of the theatre, designer, director or equivalent, that does not eventually want to be seen in the marketplace which is Broadway.

MR. LeVINE: There was one thing that Michael said that I want to comment on about the fact that there were some half-truths. I think there has always been a half-truth, even when you first got your Equity card,

about the commercial theatre being non-subsidized because I think then and now to a much greater degree, the clear-cut commercial theatre is very subsidized by those people who are within it.

We know, all of us, every day that we don't have what they have in Great Britain. We don't have playwrights who can write for films and write a play at the same time, because they are on the plane all the time. We have the same problem with actors.

In a funny way that ties in with what Dick said which is, sure, the purpose of Broadway is to make money so that the playwright or the actor or the producer can go on and do other things and still pay his bills which is very necessary.

MR. BOS: However, the bottom line remains that when money -- or when production is organized as a profit-making corporation, that stated objective is self-limiting in the material it can handle. There are certain things you will not do.

MR. LeVine: Why?

MR. FEINGOLD: I agree. But as Tom said it won't pay off. But as Tom said before, does the director really expect to make a lot of money or are there other reasons for doing it? There are other reason.

MR. GERSTEN: I think it would be simplistic to define the commercial theatre as simply profit-making and to deny the aspirations of the producer.

MR. BOS: That is not what is being done. We are saying there are strictures.

MR. GERSTEN: It's as though profit-taking or profit-making in the commercial theatre were the sole motivating factor. If a person seriously wants to make money, the last place to come is the commercial theatre. The last place. There are a thousand places to make money in the United States. So, I think it must be seen as that. Otherwise, we get to have heroes and devils and I don't think that is appropriate.

MR. FICHANDLER: The most difficult thing in the world is to project the future of a play.

MR. SCHWARTZ: I think everybody misunderstood, perhaps willfully perhaps not, what I was trying to say. We all can cite eight million examples of things which were not done simply because they could not be afforded to be done.

It's not that people didn't want to do them or didn't think they had quality. They were not done for the simple reason that you could not make enough money. Revivals of large plays, non-musicals with large casts, are practically non-existent in the commercial theatre. It is not because you can't make enough money putting on a play with a large cast to make it viable to do that in the commercial theatre.

Now people do operas at the Metropolitan Opera, and if it is "The Trojans" and calls for off-stage choruses and off-stage bands, they do it with off-stage choruses and off-stage bands because that is what Berlioz wrote and they get it subsidized. You come into a producer's office today and say you want to use more than the minimum amount of musicians in the show and you'll be laughed out on to the street. And I think we must face that fact folks. I mean, I've had it happen to me. We've all had it happen.

In other words, what I am saying is not that you're in it because you want to make money, but there are economic realities that preclude certain artistic adventures and this is precisely what we are trying to correct.

MR. FEINGOLD: I think that what Stephen said is quite right. There is a related point that I want to add to it. It even ties back to Dick's premise that you can't tell what is or isn't commercial, but after all there is history. Granted any one production might be commercial -- there might be a fluke or coincidence -- but we know that, for instance, in the 1950s there was a comparative freezeup in the number and kinds of serious new plays by Americans done on Broadway. The result of that was that a basically -- what started as a vanity theatre became a subsidized theatre. Off Off Broadway came into being.

There was a considerable shrinkage in the number of classical plays or old plays of any kind done on Broadway. The result of that was that actors and directors who wanted to work on those plays went out and started the resident theatres around the country which have been growing --

By the way, Dick, parenthetically, a lot of them have done new plays from the beginning. I worked at one for ten years that did at least a half season of new plays each year.

MR. BARR: It's a rare exception.

MR. FICHANDLER: We've never done a season without a new play since 1950.

MR. WARD: We've only done new plays.

MR. FEINGOLD: So that you saw the general lines of what the commercial theatre could not contain at that point not because the profit motive was exclusive and because everybody on Broadway is a mercenary monster, but because the profit motive was primary which meant that one aspect of mass taste, which was most profitable, was going to be the aspect that was catered to.

It does not mean other things didn't get done or wouldn't.

MR. BOS: I think everybody would be agreeable to discuss the various kinds of theatre in a horizontal way rather than a vertical. I mean there is no doubt that there is an inter-relationship.

The fact remains this country, at the risk of offending my former employer, this country does not have an institution, from an institutional viewpoint, does not have an institution in theatre comparable to the Met or the New York City Ballet or to theatre institutions in other countries. Why? I think part of the why comes out of the discussion that is going on. There is no institution of excellence.

MR. BARR: Part of the why comes out, John, because of the fact there is no tradition here: that our modern theatre began, as I insist, about 1920 with O'Neill's "Beyond the Horizon." That's about as far back as it goes. We don't have a tradition the way France and England have it. Even Germany -- of course, what's happening in Germany is incredible. They've been subsidized for years and practically no new plays of any interest have come out.

MR. FEINGOLD: The non-profit theatre came into being, as I said, to fulfill that need that wasn't going on in the private sector which was to make some kind of a permanence in theatrical institutions, to have theatres that existed in a continuing relationship with their community seriously or comically or musically or whatever, and dealt with history, with the theatre as a complete thing not as one production at a time.

MR. BOS: That's too grandiose, Michael.

MR. FEINGOLD: That's very abstract.

MR. BOS: And it's also grandiose and it's after the fact. The fact is a lot of people started theatres, as you pointed out earlier and more correctly, there was no room to do that in New York. Zelda started a theatre because she was a director. Wasn't that so?

MR. FICHANDLER: No, much more than that.

MR. GERSTEN: The plays they wanted to do.

MR. FICHANDLER: Yeah, I think that's very important. From the beginning we thought of ourselves -- as a matter of fact we started as a profit theatre. Because nobody would give us money in those days so that we had to go out and raise money -- but that was nonsense -- by sale of stock. But basically the theatre -- and we've always defined it as a humanistic theatre -- theatre that is trying to reveal man to man and our seasons are organized around that.

And many -- maybe not all, but many of the regional theatres are organized in that way. They develop their seasons to say something, and in a sense that has an artistic concept behind it and a unifying concept. We are not always conscious of what it is exactly, but I know in choosing the season many of them look at that and try to get a seasonal balance that says something to their community in an artistic way. I think that is a very important distinction.

MR. BOS: All regional theatres have not been started by artists either. Sometimes the communities themselves have looked to Washington and said, gee, they have a not-for-profit theatre, we have to have one too.

And there are theatres who are not focused on your statement, I think.

MR. FICHANDLER: There is no simple statement that covers it.

MR. WARD: I think the non-profit theatre is varied, and the various impulses that created it are broad and varied. The regional theatres -- some started, as you said, by the community, some by the artists themselves.

And in the New York context I think that, after Off Broadway, and Joe and the various attempts, the impulse to create the theatres came primarily from the artists who found that to work in the profit theatre was restrictive and you could not necessarily do the type of things that one wanted to do -- I mean in terms of the serious dramatic plays primarily that the various theatres have attempted as a part of this non-profit theatre. And the only place that the Black segment of the population could find an outlet was in the non-profit area because of many, many different economic factors, factors of autonomy that they did not possess, dependency upon the prevailing theatres, no matter how sympathetic, but yet never with their own, you know, their own say so.

And combined with the fact that it emerged out of a social upheaval in which the whole idea of autonomy and Black control became represented in the cultural arena as it was being evidenced in other aspects of American life.

I don't know what the common thread is between all of them, but I would certainly not say that you can neatly -- you can place all in a neat framework.

MR. GERSTEN: I would just say one thing, referring to Tom's and to Doug's -- where the genesis of the non-profit theatres are, I think in great measure they have been so individual; that a series of individuals at different moments in America in recent history have opted, in a similar fashion as Broadway entrepreneurs, to make the theatrical statement.

And the statement they have chosen is not in terms of a single production or even to imagine -- I don't know that very often Broadway producers, commercial producers, or commercial Off Broadway producers, have envisioned a string of productions or an ongoing theatre.

The essence, the difference between the creators of theatres has been that they have envisioned that continuity.

MR. BARR; Well, continuity of effort is the secret. The real start -- I think everybody is forgetting -- the real start of the American theatre today began in coffee houses. It doesn't have anything to do with the regional theatre. It began in the coffee house. That is where all the young playwrights except the brand new bunch that just arrived -- I'm talking about Mamet and Gistilford and so forth, all began at Cafe Cino and La Mama. And then they began exercising their talents there. They began, Sam Shepherd, Lance Wilson, all the kids began in the coffee houses. They didn't begin in the regional theatre at all.

And from the coffee houses, which was Off Off Broadway originally, they moved to Off Broadway, which was a practical situation. When we produced Off Broadway -- you said you don't want to get into figures, but "The American Dream" cost thirteen thousand dollars including bonds and so forth. It actually cost about eight.

When you could produce on that basis, you could go out and get money from people. Four hundred dollars each is about what we used to take. We wouldn't take more. That is why Off Broadway grew until Equity killed it, which they did.

MR. FICHANDLER: But it really didn't start there because prior to that there was movement in the regions: San Francisco, Cleveland, Arena, Dallas, Houston, 1949-50. Margo Jones. This had even all started even before --

MR. FEINGOLD: I don't think there is any disagreement. As I said before, it started in both places.

MR. FICHANDLER: For the same reason.

MR. FEINGOLD: I don't deny the significance of the coffee houses.

What happened was the commercial theatre was surrounded by a pincer movement on both sides, one from the playwrights and one from the performing artists and producers. Eventually there was a synthesis of those two which is the regional theatre in doing new plays.

MR. FICHANDLER: I think it is important, if we are doing something that we want Congress to understand, I would like to try something and see if you agree with me.

I think theatre, of all the performing arts, in many ways is most important for a country that is examining itself. It is theatre more than dance, more than music, more than anything else which begins and looks at what we are and what we should be. Theatre, therefore, is to my thought perhaps the most important in this time and for this country and for the future.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Well, I think we're being very snobby about film -- I mean it's quite dangerous. Film is really a very, very important art.

MR. BOS: He said in the performing arts.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Okay. In the live performing arts.

MR. FINCHANDLER: That was my limit.

MR. WARD: Just in terms of the non-profit and commercial, I think the basic, simple distinction there is the question of institutions.

I mean, the non-profit area in terms of the ultimate development of theatres -- the major development is the development of institutional theatres. And the commercial theatre -- good, bad, not value judging -- is an entrepreneur, whether it is gloriously artistic or what have you.

I mean, the distinction there is -- I think that's the basic distinction, the attempt to develop an institutional context for theatre rather than the entrepreneur, individual producers, you know.

MR. BARR: I completely accept that because I pointed out in my speech at Princeton that the theatre only had two or three institutions in the 30s and 40s: The Theatre Guild, The Group, the -- you can name them on one hand. There were no institutions in this country. I continually get back to that. There is no tradition. There is no solid background. It's coming, but it's not there. It never existed.

MR. FEINGOLD: There is no tradition, Dick. You are right. There is no history. In the mid-nineteenth century there were flourishing theatre institutions in the big cities all over this country.

Eventually what happened. They started, they traveled, a great many of them, from their home bases to the small towns and so on. A system of popular attractions and stars grew up. The stars found vehicles and started to concentrate on them. And what had started as very exciting permenent theatres eventually faded and blurred and melded until you came down to a commercial theatre made up of star vehicles. Then in 1920, as Dick said, a growth started all over again, you know, at a slightly higher level of playwriting, "Beyond the Horizons."

MR. BARR: Now you are getting to it. The point is the difference between history and tradition --

MR. FEINGOLD: Exactly. I think the major "should" in the American theatre -- the major lack right now is the institutions should have some way of being permanent so that it doesn't happen every forty or sixty years that we destroy our own history and have to start over with no base to start from and no understanding of our past and our culture.

MR. BOS: Will the data that is being collected track where playwrights are coming from, where new plays are coming from, being done, whether they transfer or not? Will the information deal with that? Because I think that is going to point you to some important sources of activity.

MR. FICHANDLER: This material is available statistically.

MR. BOS: Not all of it. I think the loft theatres have their information pretty well together. Obviously the commercial theatre does. I would be concerned about one city institution called Off Off Broadway which is unique because of New York, but which is enormous --

MR. FICHANDLER: Chicago almost has the same now, Off Loop.

MR. BOS: That's right. The point is, if we ignore Off Off Broadway as a fairly disorganized group of theatres, but a fairly fervent group of theatres, you have to take that into your analysis. Now, I know that you have collected over four thousand papers of information from our agency alone, and I hope that information is distilled and looked at in other than number terms. I have some studies to pass on to you.

MR. GERSTEN: I just want to take exception not from information but just from insight to Michael's allusion to the flourishing nineteenth century American theatre. I think that that flourishing -- you know, by contrast, a hundred years hence people viewing our theatre will say it was flourishing. But our view of it is actors underpaid, directors underengaged, you know, a whole series of things.

MR. FEINGOLD: I'm not saying that there weren't things wrong.

MR. GERSTEN: No, no. But we are flourishing also in a certain sense. We are flourishing on the backs of countless unemployed. I want to say a word about the sustenance of institutions. I think, John, you referred earlier to why in the theatre we do not have Mets, and why we don't have -- I think you said -- did you say the Philharmonic or New York City Ballet?

MR. BARR: It doesn't matter.

MR. BOS: New York City Ballet.

MR. GERSTEN: I'm for the death of institutions. I would like to speak fervently for it, to allow them to pass away. That is particularly true of my view in the theatre, because I think the theatre is still very, very much an individual or a tiny collective impulse. I'm glad that The Group does not exist today, that The Group Theatre has not survived. And I'm glad that Eva Le Gallienne's theatre has not been retained in an artificial way so that the name -- Civic Rep is still waved in the breeze whereas the original impulse that motivated the formation of that theatre has long since been lost.

And I tell you that I regularly consider, discuss in certain areas the death of the, the passing of the New York Shakespeare Festival when it's the correct time for passing to take place.

MR. WARD: My only objection to that Bernie, is the fact that -- it's a very maybe artistic, philosophical premise in terms of the creativity factor, I mean in that nothing should be artificially sustained once it has outlived its creative purpose.

However, I think there is a more basic issue here. In a society which has not perceived the theatre itself or the serious, dramatic artistic theatre as a necessity for its own life and it is more or less still perceived in capitalist terms in the sense that it's part of the, you know, the fittest will survive or what have you, my feeling is that the institution, the stability and validity of the institutional existence is primary.

Now, once you have that established; then, yes, the question of whether or not that institution will in its leadership, in its artistic activity, will continue to be fruitful and all of the aesthetic questions involved there. I think that will always be the question. If Eva Le Gallienne or somebody gets old or somebody gets flat or something like that, that should be the basis on which somebody else takes over.

But I think the death, the idea of the death of institutions even before they have established any ongoing ability, you know-- I think many of the institutions at this point are threatened with death not because of their lack of creativity, but they can't hustle for the finite dollars that exist -- to survive.

It would be very nice to say that everybody who went out of business that it was because of artistic reasons.

But I think that all of our experiences, all of our experiences -- I'm sure your experience is that you are clutching --

MR. GERSTEN: To life.

MR. WARD: -- to survive. And I would be quite willing to accept the death of bad institutions or what have you once we've established the permanence of the fact that institutions should be a permanent part of our lives, as schools and libraries and what have you.

MR. FICHANDLER: Doug has really said more eloquently what I was going to say.

I think in theoretical terms, yes, but the first priority is to get institutions established and accepted. Later on, fifty, a hundred years, we can worry about the other problem.

MR. FEINGOLD: It's the difference, Bernie, between a natural death and murder.

Institutions by their nature are going to get stale and die, and another generation of artists is going to come along and either work aginst them or revitalize them from inside, which, by the way, I think is much better.

You have the institution. It stays permanent. It takes in new artistic forces that energize it. I didn't have the good fortune to be in New York in the 1930s. I'm sorry. When I got here in the early 1960s, I would have liked to have seen The Group Theatre's production of "Awake and Sing."

MR. SCHWARTZ: I understand what Bernie is saying on the other hand, and I feel that we should not suggest to Congress that the solution of the problem of the theatre is to give another eighty million dollars to Joe Papp and have one institution that can finance whatever.

Let me talk for a couple of minutes about a particular project that Tom and I both are involved in now and the problems that we've

had with this because I really feel it is pertinent and illustrative.

I'm involved with a show which is based on a book called "Working." To do this show at all required some six months at least of workshop with actors, with stagers, et cetera, to even begin to discuss whether it was possible to do this show. When I decided I was going to do this, I had two choices: One was to go to Joe Papp; the other was to finance it myself. I chose to finance it myself. Okay. Fortunately, I had the wherewithall from the commercial theatre to be able to do that.

Then, it seemed to need a certain amount of time to grow, so that required a couple of non-commercial productions, one of which is probably going to be done at Tom's theatre. Tom is going through incredible hell to try and finance this production because it requires a cast of eighteen. The artistic requirement is a cast of eighteen. I'm also doing it at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago.

MR. FICHANDLER: Plus musicians.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Plus musicians. And I've had to cut down to less than what really should be in the cast because we cannot afford the right, the proper cast number. We had to cut the number of musicians down to what we could afford.

MR. BOS: You should have gone to Joe.

MR. SCHWARTZ: That is not such a serious problem. Yes, we could have gone to Joe. But it seems to me that should not be the only thing you can do is go to Joe Papp.

As I say, I was fortunate enough to be personally able to afford to finance this project until it could get to the point where it could seem commercial enough to get outside financing. But I went to several existing institutions and they said, we do not have the money to be able to finance a workshop. I have actors working for nothing at -- which is infuriating Equity. They did everything in their power to stop it.

MR. WARD: How did you get away with it?

MR. SCHWARTZ: Well, we had to indulge in very careful tightrope walking about what we're calling this and what we have to do. In other words, it was a real, real problem to bring this off.

And, folks, it should not be. It really should not be a problem. You are not talking about the immense expenditure of money. You are talking about a total expenditure before production of twenty thousand dollars.

And it was really very, very difficult to come up with this. And this is the kind of thing -- and, I'm not saying, give me money -- but this is the kind of thing that an individual or group of individuals, if

they have a worthwhile important project to deal with, whoever it is, should be able to do this without having had to have been lucky enough to have a big smash hit musical called "Godspell" that they can finance this with.

MR. BARR: How do you judge that?

MR. SCHWARTZ: That's tough.

MR. BARR: The New York Arts Festival is a big problem.

MR. SCHWARTZ: That's tough.

MR. BARR: That's tough. Very rarely -- I was on the advisory panel -- very rarely gave money for new projects because of the fact that we didn't know whether we were just throwing money into the hands of an amateur or --

MR. BOS: You have to separate that, Dick. Not new projects, but new institutions, new theatres.

MR. BARR: Simple projects, just exactly of the kind that Stephen was talking about.

MR. WARD: But the reputation of the artist involved is important.

MR. BARR: That's sometimes tough.

MR. SCHWARTZ: You see, it's easier for someone like myself who has a track record of three smash hits -- and I'm not saying this to brag. I'm just saying that's why I was able to do this. If I were some schnook from Iowa, who's eight times more talented than Stephen Schwartz, it's almost impossible to do this frankly.

MR. GERSTEN: -- The self-destruct philosophy is not pertinent to this. That is a totally different point of view. It shouldn't be connected to it.

One hopes that the not-for-profit theatres can do -- I don't know why it's only Joe or the New York Shakespeare Festival that could do Steve's project, if it's a twenty thousand dollar project or a hundred thousand dollars project, because the theatres are doing projects, doing works on various levels of production.

It's unfortunate, I think, if the not-for-profit theatres only go for product, only go for productions that have to meet subscription needs or audience needs and can't do developmental work.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Thank you.

MR. GERSTEN: The key is to create places where developmental work can take place and forms for the developmental work to take place.

MR. SCHWARTZ: That's correct.

MR. WARD: Just an extension of that example, I mean in terms not only of how it affects the workshop, I find that in my situation where we are committed to doing new plays a hundred percent, that even the scheduling of the subscription season is affected.

I right now have finished writing a brochure statement. It basically says we're offering this exciting repertory, two new plays by the same writer. But then we have two or three more productions to present. What I put there is that they will be selected from X amount of writers.

Now, internally my problem is that I have to hedge, since I'm dealing with new works I have to hedge because I don't really have the economic resources to dictate that I'm going to do an excellent play of nine people.

So, I'm looking for two-character plays and three-character plays, and my ability even, of the freedom -- not the luxury, just the freedom -- to do certain things that I might artistically prefer to do is affected even in the scheduling by the fact after being ridiculous last year -- doing one straight play with twenty people, a musical with eighteen people and four musicians that was a hundred and fifty thousand dollars practically to do, that you're affected by your decision-making when you don't really have the resources -- not to squander -- but just, you know, to be able to have the freedom and latitude to do that which you may deem best.

MR. BOS: This does thread both theatres together because non-profit or commercial, the dollar is the bottom line.

MR. FICHANDLER: Eventually, sure. One of the things that needs to be done -- we are talking needs and preventing the necessity of letting institutions die, is to provide a way to bring fresh people into these institutions. IBM, for example, has a layer of support. One guy goes, fresh young people come moving up. Many of the theatres that I know can't afford to have the layers of support, people to move on up. There is no training, therefore, of producing directors going on who may be the key. This whole area needs really a tremendous amount of investigation and support. That may be a way to keep an institution fresh.

MR. BOS: That's true. To point that out, when George Ballachine retires, the fate of the New York City Ballet is up in the air because that institution is that man. There is no successor.

MR. FICHANDLER: What happens if something happens to Doug? What happens to NEC?

MR. FEINGOLD: I think the basic point is that institutions have to be funded according to what "they" see as their needs because theatres have different rates and kinds of developments and want to do different things obviously.

MODERATOR: How many and what types of institutions should be funded?

MR. SCHWARTZ: You are trying to say, what do you do. You can't just throw money up in the air and whoever is underneath just happens to catch it.

I think that we are not going to answer this question today, but there are ways of approaching it.

There should be institutions available so that the following things can be accomplished.

So, specific -- let's start with Doug's case -- specific minority or ethnic groups or whatever you want to call them who do not have the ability to begin to express themselves in the theatre should have a way to do this; and not just the Black theatre, but the Spanish theatre, what started to happen with Shordiz and things like that. Those are very hard things to get going. I think certainly the specific things for minorities to begin to have a way to develop projects should be made possible.

Certainly there should be some geographical consideration; that is, it's wonderful to have the New York Shakespeare Festival, which is one of the only places that has been able to accomplish what we have been talking about, but it would be nice if either the Goodman Theatre or some similar institution in Chicago could be able to do for playwrights in that area what the Shakespeare Festival is doing here. Similarly on the Coast, or in Washington.

Certainly I think there should be a geographical consideration too so that people can get to where they have to, new people can get to where they have to be in order to be able to function.

What you are trying to do is make it possible for the talented people in the country to find a home where they can develop those talents without going to and hope to make it immediately in the commercial theatre.

MR. BARR: Well, whether we like it or not, New York City is the capital of the United States. It is the major city and always has been. That is usually where the major theatre flourishes. It's certainly been true in Europe.

My point is, I think the biggest institution we have is one we are neglecting to discuss, which is the Broadway theatre. The point is that most -- this is not to suggest that we shouldn't continually subsidize the regional theatre. I was criticized for this at Princeton. It wasn't my intention. The fact is that most of the experimenting and most of the excitement that comes from the theatre comes from Broadway eventually, irrespective of the second-rate stuff which --

MR. FEINGOLD: To Broadway.

MR. BARR: No. "From." I said "from" and I meant "from." That is where the important writers want to be seen and that is where their most important works are done. Tennessee Williams and Arthur

Miller did not begin Off Broadway.

MR. FEINGOLD: There was none.

MR. BARR: O'Neill -- if you want to say O'Neill began in the Provincetown Playhouse, okay. But that isn't exactly the way things happened. He really began on Broadway, and it wasn't until he hit Broadway that he became recognized as a major writer.

Now, this is no longer true. We are beginning to get in our regional theatres major writers working there as long as they are fairly sure that that is not where the project is going to end. And that's the big trick, I think, that we have to face eventually with the Congress.

How do we help the regional theatre to move the things into the marketplace and give the money back to them, which is part of my general plan?

MR. GERSTEN: May I offer my understanding of Broadway versus the institutional theatre? What principally for me distinguishes the Broadway theatre is the fact that physical plants, theatres, houses, are from eight hundred to sixteen hundred seats and frequently are able to remain open for extended runs and an audience for them is provided.

The essence of our institutional theatres is that we have limited audiences and we are exposed to limited markets.

The reason, Dick, as I understand it, the playwrights want to be seen on Broadway is not merely the fact that it is the center, New York, and so on, but also it's in their economic interest. It makes it possible for Steve to keep working.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Absolutely.

MR. GERSTEN: And we don't deny that. And what that is governed by is the fact that New York is able to provide those extended audiences, those enlarged audiences, and then they multiply out by being on the road as well.

MR. BARR: That is why I call the Broadway theatre the major institution of the theatre.

MR. SCHWARTZ: But, you see, Dick has raised an interesting point, and we are -- if you step back for a minute -- we are at a variance and a decision needs to be made. Do we say, all right, what's going to happen for the Broadway theatre is, out of all these other things which are funded, the best things and the most commercial things will go to the Broadway theatre and presumably make money or not, but be in a commercial setting, meanwhile art can go on elsewhere and commercial art will happen to Broadway; or are we saying that it is also possible to create for the Broadway theatre, which does not now exist in any way, the ability to afford to do risky, developmental things which we think may eventually prove to be both artistically and commercially viable? And

that's a separate question. It would be lovely to be able to do both.

MR. BOS: Haven't they found that way?

MR. BARR: England has it but we haven't.

MR. BOS: Excuse me, there was no Broadway -- there was no producer interested in bringing "The Shadow Box": to Broadway, whatever you think of it.

MR. GERSTEN: There was. Somebcdy did.

MR. BARR: Oh yes, there were quite a few. I mean, Gordon asked me if I wanted to come out and see it way back there.

MR. BOS: But after. They couldn't find start-up costs from any Broadway producer.

MR. SCHWARTZ: That is not because Broadway producers are not nice people or don't recognize the quality.

MR. BARR: All right, now we're getting to the crux. No. Because we -- how do you get "The Night of Tribades" to sell? You know, you put three stars in it and it moves. That is the only way you can move it.

This is essentially what I'm after which, when I ask for subsidy for the Broadway theatre, I don't want them to give us dollars, nickels and dimes, what I'm curious about and interested in is a method of not having the scramble occur when something interesting and exciting happens in the regional theatre so that five producers go and everybody wonders if they can get themoney to do it, each one or in competition.

I want a fund so that they can move easily at the discretion of the playwright in the originating theatre. They don't have to if they don't want to.

MR. BOS: But for the ultimate purpose of providing profit to investors.

MR. BARR: Well, I don't care whether it's that or what.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Also it would be nice, if there was a terrific play in Los Angeles, that New York could get to see frankly without having to worry about whether or not it was going to make money.

MR. BARR: That's right.

MR. WARD: My only thinking about the ultimate destination of our discussion, I think that I would say that there needs to be other methods in terms of Broadway.

However, I wouldn't want to -- I would want to make some sort of a distinction in relation to the question of the institutional theatre and

Broadway very clear because I think it will just get, you know, get sort of spread out in relation to what we are talking about in relation to the subsidy or what have you.

Broadway -- I must say that I think Broadway still takes care of itself. I mean in the way it operates.

I don't think necessarily very well in the sense that we all know that a vacuum has existed in the last ten or twelve years in relation to the ability or desire or the economic ability to do or take risks for serious dramatic works, and if you add native American to it, it would be even lessened.

So, what I think has filled that vacuum -- the road doesn't exist any more, the tryout routes don't exist any more; so maybe even Williams and Miller have a hard time --

MR. BARR: You know why, Doug? Because playwrights are not writing the plays in the smoke-filled room of the hotel any more.

MR. WARD: No, but the point I'm coming to, this vacuum, this repository of the attempt to do serious work has basically been assumed by the institutional theatre. And those works that we have done that have happened to be -- Broadway producers individually or what have you have deemed fit for a wider audience after they have tried out in our theatre, after they have proven to a certain extent that they have some sort of audience appeal going beyond just a brief run, then the Broadway producers have done those shows.

I think if you look at the record of the Tony Awards, whatever they mean to you, still in the last ten years I would say practically seventy-five percent of the works except the English works have come in one way or another from the institutions.

MR. BARR: Last ten years? No, no way.

MR. WARD: I mean if you just look at the Tony Awards and the contenders for it.

MR. BARR: If you go back ten years you won't find any of them except for the last two or three years, yes.

MR. WARD: We don't have to argue about that. I think you can list them off right now and I think that would be confirmed.

So, the question for me is that there has to be some sort of a separation in relation to the risk taking and the reasons for the serious works being done in the institutional context or regional theatre context and the distinction between Broadway.

We are not producing with the same motives, and consequently that will eventually affect the idea of what we are talking about when we ask for, you know, for subsidy.

I would just like to end this by saying that there is another factor in terms of the problems of not having subsidy, and I think this goes back to an idea that the American theatre can exist and be subsidized or be supported on a year-to-year basis by the private and the business sector, and therefore, the question of subsidy is thought of as a component while we are all go out and hussle these monies that we just need to win from the private and business sector.

I don't know what the study will show, but I think all evidence will prove that that dependency on, that idealized hope of dependency on the private business sector is a wholly erroneous idea, and that it puts the institutional theatres in a position where we are spending overwhelming effort trying to all get the money from this same pool --

MR. GERSTEN: Out of stone.

MR. WARD: -- and it's not there. Therefore, the question of subsidy is in relation to -- we are expected to get ten percent or eight percent from the government and then we will go out and get the rest of it from the private and business sector. That is proving to be death for all of us because it's just not there. And it's an erroneous idea that that is what is going to make up for the lack of sufficient subsidy on the part of governmental sources.

MR. BARR: We have the same problem going into the private sector to get money to back plays now. Absolutely the same problem.

MR. BOS: Your second point, what should theatre achieve, what should the theatre be, part of the difference between the music and dance aspects of the performing arts and theatre is that no serious musician or dancer arrives at professionalism without training.

I don't mean to make a pitch for training here, but training of integral involvement with theatre does not exist in this country as it does in music and dance.

No one would pretend to be a dancer or musician without training. A lot of people pretend to do theatre without training, sheerly on impluse.

If you go to Broadway today and you look at the playbills and you look at the bio's, you will find that the non-profit theatre is the training ground for actors as has been indicated here.

It has taken over the role of providing training.

MR. FICHANDLER: Weakly.

MR. BOS: Weakly, but I mean by experience. Design ideas begin not on Broadway but where, you know, design experimentation is encouraged. It shows up in "Candide," it shows up in "Hair." It is the research and development ground, isn't it, because --

MR. FICHANDLER: It's all research and development.

MR. BOS: -- no matter what your pressures are, that is where the ideas begin.

Now, I see it subverting -- I see the commercial opportunities. When we talk about Michael Bennett's weekly prose, that becomes a plum in the eyes of many boards of directors around the country and many people who are on the threshhold of survival whose board says get a show in there that can do that for us.

I see it in some cases where there is not really strong artistic leadership subverting whatever the intention of that theatre was, because they are now going for the very plum that Richard has to go to investors for. So, it is becoming a confusion.

MR. FICHANDLER: To develop further what Doug said, a comment of one corporate man to me when I asked for money, he said: Well, I'm sorry, we give our money to the Kennedy Center. We can get more back for our buck there. In other words, if you go to the commercial, the corporate, for support, they are interested in what it is going to do for their corporation not what it is going to do for the art of theatre, and nothing to do with it.

As a matter of fact, one guy, who was a potential donor, said: Oh, God, the play I just saw, I can't -- I'm going to give mine to music where the ideas won't be so disastrous.

MR. FEINGOLD: This is one of the responsibilities of theatre which unfortunately nobody wants to take on.

MR. GERSTEN: I don't know what the number of dollars of profit the commercial theatre generates in a given year, and I'm certain that that is one of the numbers that will come out if discernible. But I wish that a portion of that profit, whatever it is, were reinvested by the commercial theatre so that Stephen's work could be done as an experimental work in that theatre.

MR. BARR: That is precisely what I'm suggesting but nobody ever --

MR. FICHANDLER: I think that has to be extended beyond theatre to movies and television. We are the training ground for those.

MR. GERSTEN: You mean to get a feedback from those others?

MR. FICHANDLER: Absolutely.

MR. GERSTEN: Well, but that's an idea that has really recurred through the years but never with any success, to geta nickel out of television, to get a nickle out of records. I always thought that the Philharmonic should have bought The Beatles. If they had The Beatles they would have been home free.

MR. LeVINE: Bernie, don't you think that there is some reinvestment of that profit by the fact that these same people who make the profit are going into the theatre and reproducing things.

MR. GERSTEN: Stephen is doing it directly.

MR. FICHANDLER: It's so minimal. So minimal.

MR. GERSTEN: Because Stephen can take care of himself in some small measure, you know, within limits, but the guy from Idaho -- or was it Iowa? -- doesn't have that opportunity. That is what the pool, what there should be one hopes, a developmental pool of money.

MR. SCHWARTZ: There used to be a way. Mr. Barr used to do this --

MR. BARR: We used to do it ourselves. I put in a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. That's why I'm broke.

MR. LeVINE: You mean that the investor who makes a lot of money from any commercial venture is not encouraged to take another venture on because of the profits fromthe first? Is that what you mean?

MR. FICHANDLER: No.

MR. LeVINE: Then why is it minimal?

MR. FICHANDLER: It hasn't been feeding into -- anywhere.

MR. LeVINE: They don't come back again? I want to stay on one point. We were talking, I thought, about the profit made in the commercial Broadway theatre. That profit is made by individuals and production entities. Tom said very little bit of that goes back again --

MR. FICHANDLER: To us. To the regional --

MR. SCHWARTZ: Absolutely.

MR. FICHANDLER: --to the non-profit.

MR. LeVINE: Oh, yes, but maybe it's gone back to the quote commercial theatre.

MR. FICHANDLER: That may be. But we were talking about another problem.

MR. GERSTEN: You mean investors reinvest, producers reproduce?

MR. SCHWARTZ: Sure.

MR. LeVine: What is wrong with that? Why should -- the way you say it it's almost as if the profit made from the commercial theatre should go back to someplace other than the commercial theatre. Why should it?

MR. FICHANDLER: -- the commercial theatre, television and movies; because where are the actors, who are now in movies, where do they come from? We have lost -- and we are finding it all through the regional theatres harder and harder to keep the mature actor from going out west. One guy said to me: Look, I can work for you for a whole year. All I need is one shot out there and I make more money. This is getting to be a much more serious problem than it used to be.

Those are the areas that should be feeding because we are training the people for them. Not only for them, we are doing it for ourselves. But it is making it harder for the theatres like ours to be really what we want to be.

MR. LeVINE: May I suggest to you that we also have to help the theatres. But if we subscribe to Dick's theory, which I do, about the importance of New York and the commercial theatre -- I hate using that term because it's a derogatory term -- I think we ought to start helping them too. If you help only the feeders and not the place where they are going, you may not have a place for the feeders to send their plays.

MR. WARD: We don't have to go anywhere.

MR. LeVINE: Then why are we calling them feeders?

MR. WARD: Because -- not -- the risks, the training, the works, big investment in the new playwrights --

MR. GERSTEN: The hustling.

MR WARD: -- all of these things are being done essentially by the institutional, regional theatres. But the Broadway theatre and television, movies, what have you, reaps the benefit of this work done by what you say are the feeders, but the conduits -- I mean, the money never comes back directly to the sources where the work is being done.

MR. BARR: Why not tax the playwright? Make the playwright give it back to you.

MR. WARD: I'm not talking about the successor; I'm not talking about the struggling playwright. I'm talking about -- on Broadway, the Shuberts, they have a foundation. So they distribute X amount of monies around to those who go and request a grant.

MR. BOS: But for groups they think they perceive or works they perceive are going to reinforce -- and this is entirely proper-- their area of interest in theatre. And that is a feeding back.

MR. FICHANDLER: That may be taxably a problem.

MR. WARD: We have assumed a role which Broadway before did on its own.

MR. LeVINE: No. There were stock theatres. There were other ways of trying out plays. There were other places that your actors got their training.

MR. WARD: Where is it happening now?

MR. BARR: It's happening in the regional theatre now.

MR. SCHWARTZ: I think that a problem has come up here that we should deal with. I think it is very unfair to refer to the regional theatres as -- and I'm a great supporter of them -- as feeders and Broadway is the feedee.

If you look at any of the regional schedules -- and I don't mean to pick on Washington, it's just that I happen to know their schedule this year -- if you look down that schedule you'll find "Nightclub Cantata" which started in New York, you'll find "National Health" from England to Broadway to there --

MR. BOS: England to Long Wharf to --

MR. SCHWARTZ: In other words -- all right. I see that I picked very bad examples. Maybe they'll all be like that, but --

MR. BOS: No. They have recycled many shows that didn't work on Broadway.

MR. FICHANDLER: Constantly.

MR. BOS: "The Devils."

MR. SCHWARTZ: Yes. The point is this is not regionals going to Broadway, the end. It's a cycle, folks. Things come from here to there from things to here. I think we have to recognize that, I personally feel that the Broadway theatre and the people who have made money in the Broadway theatre have been remarkably good as a matter of fact about recycling their money.

You have people like David Merrick and people like Stuart Ostrow who have made killings on Broadway who create foundations to put on plays that they know are going to lose money. Maybe there is a tax benefit to them, but they do it anyway.

You have people like the new guys who produced "Annie." Now they produced "Night of the Tribades" on Broadway which they knew they were not going to make any money on, but they felt they wanted to do something artistic from some of the money they made from "Annie."

So, Broadway people are not villains who are attempting to take all of the money they can take out of it.

The fact remains that, with all of these relatively good intentions, there isn't enough money coming out of the Broadway theatre to go back

into it and still allow you to take risks. That is the very reason for the necessity of some sort of subsidy for Broadway as well as for regionals.

MR. FEINGOLD: I don't want to get into the whole question of subsidizing Broadway which is fiscal and too complicated for me.

I have a large objection to this whole concept of, quote, regional, unquote, theatre and to the whole feeder principle. I'm sorry to say it's a moral objection. I hate to bore you all.

This is a very large country and I agree with Dick, New York is a wonderful city and the cultural capital. It has the marketplace, and when somebody creates a major work of art outside of New York, if enough people are that interested in, sooner or later it is seen in New York. It is put on the market.

That is not what a permanent institution in San Francisco or Seattle or Kansas City -- if there is one in Kansas City -- is about. It is about the people in Kansas City. It is about the people in San Francisco and their relationship to the theatre as a whole and to the company.

There is a reason why the Goodman Theatre wants to do this musical of Stephen's, and it's not only because it may come to New York and make ten cents for the Goodman Theatre, but because it has to do with a book and a man who are of importance to Chicago, who is a major local figure, a cultural asset, a part of the culture of that city.

And whether "Working" comes to New York and makes ten million dollars or not, "Working" -- or whatever your working title is -- has a relationship to Chicago that makes it important to that theatre. That theatre is creating something indigenous.

David Mamet uses Chicago language and people in New York cannot follow his speech rhythms -- there is such a thing as a regional phenomenon. That is why I prefer the term resident theatre. The theatre is in residence in that city. It lives there. It deals with those people. It makes its art for them and of them.

And the incessant flux and the constant drain of the market, always dragging playwrights and plays, productions, actors away is a terrifying thing.

Tom has seen this happen in Washington when they have tried to give the Arena Stage some status by moving productions to Broadway so that it is easier for the Arena to gain funding. What happens if, while you are doing that, you lose your company? They are tied up for a year on Broadway in "The Great White Hope." People come to see them. They become film actors, television actors, whatever. They are not the Arena Stage any more. Again, you are destroying the cultural institutions while they are being born.

MR. FICHANDLER: You are right on the button. What we face and what we want is a company. We are talking about "should be's." We

should be able to put together and develop and keep a bunch of actors economically viable so they can raise their kids and send them to college; so they can work in an area and not have to go hustling around the country every time, designers, directors, actors.

I was talking to a director yesterday. He said: I'm exhausted. I've been in six different cities in the last year directing here, there and everywhere. I want a home where I can work and not have to worry about it constantly.

The actors are the same. We have one actor that has been with us twenty years, and he's an exception. Most of them come and go, and we are now down at the present moment to a company of six. We would like to have eighteen. They have gone off. They have to go elsewhere. We can't afford to keep them and treat them as decent human beings as well as actors.

This is a "should be" that is very important if we are ever going to develop the kind of institutions that will give us a tradition in this country.

MR. BOS: And also eighteen is about half the number that he really needs.

MR. FICHANDLER: Oh, yes. You can't cast a season for eighteen.

MR. GERSTEN: Michael alluded to the regional theatres around the country. I just wanted to add in the New York non-profit theatres because it is no less true. That is all. One thinks of it because those cities do not have the input of Broadway. Here, the fact of Broadway would seem to make it unnecessary to have the independent theatres here. But out lives here in New York are the same as elsewhere.

I spoke earlier about the death of -- I spoke towards or for the death of institutions. I would like to say something that is quite opposite to that, which I believe in simultaneously with no conflict at all -- the nurturing of resources.

I've been thinking about it only because this is within a seven-day period I'm sitting on two panels. I think of it in more careful detail in regard to a dancer than I do in regard to all the resources of the theatre.

The putting together of a dancer is a long time work to make an artist, to create someone who is capable of generating, of creating, of a creative act. I agree that we have a tendency to let them go.

Doug said it earlier. Doug said, to let things die aborning. He didn't say those words but that is what he was alluding to. The same thing. We have a tendency as a culture to let things go; that if you can't make it under the capitalist rules, let them die. Every resource, every art's resource that we have -- because I believe that there are few. We have

lots of theatres -- well, lots? We have a number of independent theatres. We have performing artists in great numbers. We do not nurture them.

The primary subsidy -- I think if we have to refer to the subsidy of the performing arts, that subsidy comes from, you know, the first level of it is the performing artists themselves. That's what we need to overcome.

MODERATOR: What does the for-profit theatre need to make risk-taking possible?

MR. BARR: It's a complicated answer, but I'll try and make it simple.

Either tremendous tax relief from every aspect so that risks -- so thattickets can come down and the whole situation, the whole economic picture will change, or the other alternative is a non-profit fund so certain special kinds of work which may not be necessarily "Getting Gertie's Garter" or equivalent can be put on a Broadway stage without risk on a non-profit basis.

The British system at the moment -- I haven't checked recently -- they have a double system. They have a profit, non-profit corporation which has intermixed boards of directors so that when they wish to move a show or take a show of some risk, it can move either into the profit section or into the non-profit section. It's a very complicated system. I don't know whether it would work here because of our laws but there is a method of setting up such a fund if one wishes to do so.

That would reduce risks on things like "The Shadow Box," "The Night of the Tribades," so forth. A fund would be there and you would just move it.

The regional theatre naturally or the theatre from which it came would share in the gross, so that the money was being fed back to them on a very healthy level one hopes.

MR. GERSTEN: In terms of "should be," if a work that is generated in a non-profit theatre gets into a profit-making position, has a capability of profit, I wish and I think what should be is that all that profit should turn back to the generating institution.

The means should be found to move that play where profit is indicated to Broadway directly with no private profit-takers intervening between them.

MR. BARR: That is the purpose of the whole non-profit setup. That is what we are talking about.

MR. LeVINE: How do you deal with the point that you made before, Bernie, how do you deal with his point, if you are going to return the profit fromthe commercial Broadway whatever production, the generating

institution. Is not the generating institution going to try and produce plays that are going to get into the other situations so they can get the profit back, and are they going to be any different really except for their source money from the foundation rather than investors in a Broadway production?

When I say "any different," I don't mean better or worse.

MR. GERSTEN: I understand.

MR. LeVINE: How different is it?

MR. GERSTEN: Let us tackle that question and let us answer it, and there is a good group of people to answer that question.

Have the institutional theatres become corrupted by the fact that shows sometimes go to Broadway? What is the answer?

John, you answer it.

MR. BOS: It's a large question. We deal with it. Doug is on our theatre panel and we deal with it monthly.

MR. WARD: The basic question here is not that the question to go on to Broadway is a corruptive influence in itself. I think no one can predict what is going to be a hit even in a commercial situation. Anybody who is foolish enough to think that way, I mean, is wasting their money. One thing of a particular kind may be a success and the same thing of that kind is a total failure.

The question with the institutional theatres is that I don't think any of our motives -- at least I know in terms of our experience with it -- we never have done anything, selected a particular work because we thought it was going to make Broadway.

I do not think that way even after having a couple of things that did go to Broadway because I know as an artistic director of the company that my basic responsibility is not to just one single play, but I have a season to put on.

Now, I'm eclectic in my tastes. So, the possibility in terms of -- take Black theatre -- the possibility, it's been sort of proven generally that the thing that may tend to have more of a commercial broader audience appeal may be a particular type of work, a realistic work of identification or what have you.

If I find a good work of that kind, it's not that I selected it because I think it is going to Broadway. I still select it because I think that's a good work of its particular genre.

If it's finally -- the decision about going to Broadway basically, personally for me is when my one hundred and fifty seat theatre, it's

obvious that my one hundred and fifty seat theatre cannot contain the particular audience, and Broadway to me is a geographical location --

MR. GERSTEN: Where you can rent theatres.

MR. WARD: -- where the theatre can be rented, and yes, there are greater risks and the costs go up and you are faced with the union. But, however, the motive behind it is not the question of moving it there, and then after moving it there and succeeding, then your only purpose in life is to select plays for that reason.

MR. BOS: Did you do "Niger" on your own money?

MR. WARD: Yes, I was going to refer to this in terms of what Bernie was saying. We happened to, in this peculiar situation, work out a deal with the theatre owners. They needed something in the house, and there were some -- part of the managerial staff who were sympathetic for their own self-interests, but had a sort of sympathy for what we were doing.

We were able to work out a deal in which we did not have private investors. It was basically -- we made a deal with them. We went there, and after we paid the rent and whatever we owed them in terms of the deal, whatever profits we might have made would have come back to us. This was our experience two times.

MR. BOS: Now "Bubbling Brown Sugar" and "The Wiz" have commercial investment. Does that represent Black theatre as it is being done at the Negro Ensemble Company?

MR. WARD: No. It's in many ways the antithesis of what I'm --

MR. BOS: Exactly. All I'm trying to point out when commercial investment is made it limits the kinds of work that can be done.

MR. WARD: I have no interest in "Bubbling Brown Sugar" in a way. I have no interest in that as an artistic choice. Somebody else might.

But what I'm basically saying there, just to give you an idea, is that the idea of corruption because of success, or what have you, in terms of Broadway is that you -- any artistic director, any decent theatre would not even think in those terms because, I mean, it's invalid. It's invalid even to waste all of your time and energy trying to pick out what you think is going to be a commercial success.

MR. FICHANDLER: Our first criteria is what will this play do for our audience.

MR. GERSTEN: And you have to to survive as an institution.

MR. BOS: Would that that were always so --

MR. BARR: How does that differ from the individual producer? He survives on exactly the same basis. I don't produce shows on Broadway to make money.

MR. GERSTEN: But he survives on the basis of profit. The non-profit institutions do not survive on the basis -- they survive on the basis of the integrity of their theatre.

MR. FICHANDLER: We do a Russian play, "The Ascent of Mount Fuji" which we know really has no commercial interest.

MR. BARR: For my integrity, if you think I have survived on profit, you're crazy.

MR. BOS: There are exceptions on both sides.

MR. FICHANDLER: You're not the best example of the bad guys.

MR. LeVINE: I never heard that theory espoused before, the theory that regional theatre or resident theatre or theatre or not-for-profit theatre might be tempted to select a play which they thought might work quote unquote on Broadway because it will bring money back. I never heard that before.

It's one thing that we all understand, that the public at large does not. I had a call about six or eight weeks ago from a very bright lawyer from a very good law firm in New York who represents a client who is an author, and she said to me for various reasons which are not important to us, she said, could you please evaluate this play. And I said, I beg your pardon? She said, could you please tell me what you think the earnings will be? I said, I really don't understand your question. The play, as I understand it, is not completed yet. She said, yes, that's right. It was not a playwright who had written fourteen plays like an Arthur Miller where you might think -- you know, when Arthur Miller writes a play there are fourteen theatres in Europe that want to option it period.

This lawyer would not believeme when I told her that I didn't know anybody -- and I really don't -- who could say, yes, that play is worth X dollars. And she went and asked seven other people. And that's one of our problems. The people in general don't perceive the theatre the way we know it to be.

MR. WARD: Sometimes the problems we may face with a Joe Walker or someone like that, then when I go to other writers, they are thinking abouy repeating possibly the success of a Joe Walker.

My only answer to them is that I'm going to do this production as best I can. I have no predictions; I have no interest in what's going to happen to it beyond the point that it's scheduled to run.

I think, if we sit down and make the decisions about who is going to be in it and all of those questions -- it should be the best actors,

the best team to put this play on -- and let's stop worrying about you becoming a Joe Walker and so forth.

I mean, you have to contend with it; attitudes; you have to contend with how you're perceived if you go to Broadway. Then people are not going to give you money because they think you are making a tremendous profit and that you don't need them. But not internally I don't think that is our motive.

MR. SCHWARTZ: I'd like to deal with another "should be" which is something that Tom raised. This is not something dealing with what we have been talking about here, but a different thing that I think should be in the record. I have no answers as to how to achieve this or the possible structure for it.

But Tom talked about having the company that can work and develop together. This is something that has been very successful from an artistic point of view in other countries. You think about the Moscow Art Theatre out of which the Stanislawsky technique developed. You think about what they have in England now with the National Theatre and with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

There is an enormous value which does not exist really -- it doesn't exist at all in the commercial theatre and barely exists frankly in the non-profit theatre in this country -- of getting the group of artists together and allowing them to form a company and develop together.

Again, one of the reasons why the particular project I'm working on right now demands workshop; one of the reasons that Michael's show for Joe which made millions demanded all that time is that you have to generate a company and a kind of style and tone develops out of that.

I don't think it's possible to have just one of these companies but it would be nice, as Tom said, to have a handful at least where this kind of a continuing and growing work could go on. I think enormously important things could come out of this. I think back to the old Actors Studio days when "A Hatful of Rain" developed out of that kind of a system.

And there is very little wherewithall for this kind of thing in this country. That would be a nice goal to at least consider.

MODERATOR: Should there be a national theatre in this country?

MR. FICHANDLER: I think from two different points similar things have been proposed.

I stood next to Joe Papp when we were both testifying before Brademas' subcommittee. And Joe said: Look, why don't you tell the Endowment that they should pick a half dozen or so theatres around the country and be sure all around the country those theatres are supported and developed, become the basis for a national theatre.

And that really has been supplemented by the Equity concept of a national theatre, not a single, one theatre which may be possible in Gritain which is so small but which is impossible in this country and would be ridiculous; but to develop a group of theatres that really can become the basis for what we would like to think of as a multi-form national theatre. I think that is an important "should be."

And there are a number of institutions that have grown up now. I can name five immediately: ACT, Mark Taper Forum, Guthrie, Long Wharf, Arena. Those five at least, it seems to me, have proven that they can do something out in the regions.

I'm not talking about New York because I don't know the New York situation. But those at least should be the nucleus, I think, of a national theatre if they were given sufficient substance, not subsidy, so that they could develop in the lines that they all know they could and should develop but can't because they are hamstrung.

MR. GERSTEN: Are we saying then that the resource for a national theatre along that pattern, Tom, exists, that these theatres would continue to be essentially what they are?

MR. FICHANDLER: Right.

MR. GERSTEN: It's not that their program would alter, is it?

MR. FICHANDLER: But more of what they are.

MR. GERSTEN: But would be able to fulfill their program if the resources were made available. So, we are not defining a single kind of theatre. It's not the British National Theatre; it's not the Moscow Art Theatre. It's the theatres that already exist but fulfilled.

MR. FICHANDLER: In fact, what Michael said before, the multiplicity to serve the different areas.

MR. FEINGOLD: And this is -- excuse me -- exactly analogous to a country like Russia or Germany. The Moscow Art Theatre happens to be the theatre that Americans have heard of because Stanislawsky happened to invent a teaching method. It is not the national theatre of Russia. It isn't the largest theatre in Russia and it isn't the most heavily subsidized theatre in Russia. Every city in Russia has a national theatre and Moscow and Leningrad and the bigger cities have eight or ten or twenty.

MR. WARD: It has thirty.

MR. FEINGOLD: Okay.

MR. GERSTEN: They don't have any private ones. Just like they don't have any private post offices.

MR. FEINGOLD: But they have every different kind of theatre.

MR. BARR: And the government subsidizes them all to the hilt.

MR. BOS: The interesting technical footnote here where I subscribe wholeheartedly to the idea of tax relief and other methods of supporting the Broadway or commercial theatre; I mean, Michael Bennett didn't work for a year in your house without the thought or rather the end all being the production for the public. Obviously, there was a motivation for Michael beyond doing it just --

Anyhow, the tax relief, if that could happen, would be available to everybody that wanted to participate in that tax relief on an economic basis.

It has to be pointed out that funds from government agencies, state and federal, are adjudicated on artistic quality grounds. So therefore, monies from the Endowment, monies from State Councils, are not available on a wide basis. They are adjuged on artistic quality whereas tax relief for commercial theatre would be available on an economic basis. That is not related to anything that is being said here, but I think it's an important footnote.

MODERATOR: What priorities for funding would you assign the different needs you have been talking about?

MR. FICHANDLER: Well, so long as the funds are limited, you have to have a limited objective. Obviously, like you talked before about the flourishing theatre, we talked about the flourishing National Endowment, but it's still getting a piddling amount of money for what it has to do. And so long as the money available is piddling, we are going to have a piddling solution.

MR. GERSTEN: I'd like to answer that question. I think that the assumption is that the funding that presently goes on of a great number of companies -- and really there are an enormous number of companies -- would continue but that a special program or a special point of view would be developed that suggests massive funding based upon needs and aspirations that are defined, would be available for a pilot national theatre program with the number of theatres.

Isn't that it, Tom?

MR. FICHANDLER: Yes, precisely. That's what Joe had in mind a number of years ago.

MR. GERSTEN: Yes.

MR. FEINGOLD: If I can add to that, I don't think anybody is saying we should cut off funding to the smaller theatres simply because there are five or ten big ones. The big ones depend on the small ones for reactions, for challenge, for competition artistically.

MR. BOS: Michael's point is well taken. I mean Off Off Broadway could not exist if it were not for Broadway. There is a contrapuntal relationship there in some ways.

MR. FEINGOLD: Off Off Broadway came into being as a reaction to Broadway theatres.

MR. BOS: That's right. And also the talent focus of bodies here.

MODERATOR: What should the relationship be between for-profit and not-for-profit theatre?

MR. BARR: Well, I've always said it ought to be absolutely open book and that it should be so simple to move back and forth that there should be no temptation involved, there should be no scrambling for product involved. It should be absolutely simple and non-profit and very easy to do going either direction.

The implications are a pool so that things can be moved as they occur in the Off Broadway and regional theatre and they wish to move them; and/or that a producer, for instance, let's say he has what might be considered an artistic success but it's not a financial success on Broadway, could immediately shift it to those regional theatres which wished it.

MR. GERSTEN: Are there impediments to that? What are the impediments?

MR. FEINGOLD: You mean you would shift the production?

MR. FICHANDLER: One of the big impediments that exists now is that regional theatre with a small company, if its play moves to New York with that company, what are they left with? That is a real problem unless we had a company of fifty so that we could send fifteen on to New York, which is what happens in Russia. Companies tour but part of the company tours. The rest is still on its home base with the rest of its company. To talk that simple movement requires a lot of funding before we can get to that point.

MR. LeVINE: Was Dick talking about moving productions or moving plays?

MR. BARR: Either one.

MR. FICHANDLER: Well, either one, but ideally you want to move the production. Why not?

I would say a company large enough to split off part of its people to move and come back. This is what happens in the Soviet Union. They do exactly that. Part of the company goes on tour, the rest stays there. Then they come back together again for their next season.

MR. BOS: Orchestras do it.

MR. FEINGOLD: I think you have to make a distinction there, that Americans have seen the theatre as being analogous to fried chicken franchising. You do it in New York City, then you do little rubber stamped copies all over the country. That does not strike me as fitting into the multiplicity of what has grown in the not-for-profit theatre.

Say someone does a new play on Broadway. Maybe a regional theatre may want to take it up and work on it from a different angle with their existing company. In Europe this would be normal. You don't want to do a play the same way in Berlin or Hamburg. I don't want to see a plan come into being where it can't happen.

MR. BARR: I want it open as possible and as free as possible depending on the parties concerned on both sides, how they wish to do it. And there should be funds there for that purpose.

MR. FICHANDLER: I think it would be very refreshing for part of my company to go to San Francisco, go to Chicago.

MR. FEINGOLD: To trade productions.

MR. FICHANDLER: Not trade. Trading is very hard.

MR. FEINGOLD: I know.

MR. FICHANDLER: We tried this. It really doesn't work. The theatres are so different in shape and in verey other way. Occasionally it can work.

But it would be marvelous -- that is a highly desirable "should be." We would like to take our company to South America in the winter when their season is at its height and ours is at its lowest. These are all marvelous possibilities that today do not exist.

MR. WARD: I think the basic question, Tom, is the question of the company as a concept. And basically what I think you're talking about besides directors and all other people, you are talking about a resident company sufficiently large enough to give you certain flexibilities.

Now, it's hard to predict in advance what the question of moving a company will do to an institution unless you are dealing with a specific work, the amount of people involved.

I mean, it could be a flexible thing. The decision may finally arrive, you know, that you may -- if the particular property involves your entire company, then the question of moving it, whether or not it can move, the decision will be made not to do it.

MR. GERSTEN: Or not at that time.

MR. WARD: Or let it be reproduced somewhere else or independently. It has to be left open. But I think the question of the one thing that Tom referred to, I mean, like the question of the one thing that Tom referred to, I mean, like the question of the impermanence of the companies, you can't pay, you can't pay the money to keep the people. There are many actors whom I've encountered who, if they had a living wage, solid living wage --

MR. FICHANDLER: If they earned as much as a plumber, they would stay.

MR. WARD: Yes. They would stay.

MR. BOS: That's terrible.

MR. WARD: But since they don't have that, they have to go out and get employment elsewhere. We started with a permanent company for three years. We were unique. And we couldn't keep them.

MODERATOR: If funds were available to ensure formation and continuity of companies, would the artists want to remain in a company situation?

MR. FICHANDLER: There will be some in and out.

MR. WARD: Take the process of getting together this quote ideal company. Given a talent resource, there are certain talents in our society who will not want to remain stationary. There are others who, if given the regularity and stability of the income, would prefer to do it.

Now, assuming that we have an equal talent, it means eventually in putting that company together, the considerations of the artists who work with it will include the question of the point of view of the performers and their desire to work in a repertory situation or permanent resident company.

There are many, many others who will never want to do that. There are other ways like the Royal Shakespeare Company. There is a certain group, and I know, I face it particularly with Black actors because, when you get to actors of my age category, forget it because there are only a handful, and the best have found the ability to work in the commercial arena. When I need them, I can't put a twenty-year-old actor in a forty- or fifty-year=old character, so I have to seek them to find out whether they are available and bring them back and they can only stay five or six weeks.

Now, in the British system, the Royal Shakespeare, for instance, will have a roster of well-known actors who want to continue to work on the stage and are able to commit themselves from three to four months every two years or something like that.

The roster is big enough. Therefore, in committing Olivier to this period of time and Quayle or whoever to another period of time, you have access to actors who may be needed on not a permanent basis but they will work with you regularly on a limited basis.

Now, the core company has to be the one that is permanent. That may then give you the latitude in need. If you need a particular talent of a particular artist who can't work there, you may be able to deal with that.

But we don't have the means to even have the basic core company of basically young to early middle-aged actors who will want to work in a repertory situation.

I'll just end this by saying, until we have this -- and I will talk about this aesthetically -- then there is a limit of achievement. You can only go so far in achieving the particular work that you are trying to do because there is no other way of achieving, reaching that final extra higher level of result unless you have a company.

You can hire ten brilliant actors individualistically and the director cannot mold those actors into a harmonious working team no matter all of their talent unless they have the experience of the give and take, a relationship and working together in common, coming to some common basis of understanding in terms of the interaction between them.

And therefore, for artistic reasons it's something that is necessary or else you will find that you will always find the situation as it happens very often on Broadway. You have Frank Langella and, I understand, maybe a couple of other actors not committed. They're winking at the audience while he's acting out a total conviction, and then suddenly the whole thing may not work because there is not a common stylistic approach to the work and so forth. You can only get that in a situation where you have some sort of a permanence of artists' relationships with each other.

MR. BARR: Well, to expand on what Doug says, all of the theatres that have been mentioned so far and a few that haven't have been around a director. Every single one of them. And they only occur once in a generation if that often. You can go through the modern history of Europe and you can find five that existed of any serious importance in the development of the theatre.

The big question to me it seems is not so much worrying about forming a permanent company. It seems to me we have permanent companies. We have the greatest actors in the world in the United States. There is no question about it. And the permanent company is there.

I don't think that actors have to get together in order to be able to work together. Under the aegis of a very good director, a really talented director, you can make a company in a very short time for a particular production. I'm not a supporter of the idea.

I think the idea of supporting the regional theatre in the way that has been suggested here with maybe pushing money into four or five of the major ones that have proven they can sustain themselves is a very good one.

But to suggest that out of that is going to grow a national theatre, I don't think there is any possibility of that. I think a national theatre will grow when we have a director possibly of the caliber of Welles. I think Orson defected is really what happened. Orson has actually grown up --

MR. WARD: Why should we have one national theatre?

MR. BARR: We don't have to have it. We don't have to have it at all as far as I'm concerned.

MR. WARD: National theatres.

MR. BARR: Well, you have to have a director of major stature to make that possible.

MR. BOS: People come to New York to see The Met, to see The City Ballet and to see Broadway. Very different. We know they come to see Broadway.

MR. FICHANDLER: The development of major directors is also a critical problem. And I mentioned this in passing when I talked about the need for directors to find a home where they can grow and develop.

And several of them have told me, you know, when I work with a group of actors I've worked before, I can get much further much more quickly.

MR. BARR: Well, that's true.

MR. FICHANDLER: And I can go further into the art and not worry so much about are they speaking properly, which is very valuable. And I think you may get, if you have a number of places around the country where you have good actors and good directors working fairly well and close together, you may develop several very important artistic institutions, not just one.

MODERATOR: Where do you see funds coming from to support implementation of the needs you have identified? What about the private sector?

MR. GERSTEN: Figures on increased corporate giving are a generalized figure for the arts in general not for the theatre.

MR. WARD: Absolutely that's true. Also when you're starting from such a low point of involvement our corporate support last year

from eight thousand to sixteen thousand.

MR. GERSTEN: What percentage of your budget is that, Tom?

MR. FICHANDLER: Of a two million-dollar budget.

MR. WARD: Take the National Endowment budget, for instance. In that, if you measure that and it started from zero, we all should now be really shouting and jumping up in the air because we got to the point of what? -- eighty some million?

MR. GERSTEN: A hundred million.

MR. WARD: A hundred million --

MR. GERSTEN: In ten years.

MR. WARD: And then the challenge grants and all of that. That on paper would be astounding.

The question of how it meets the need is another thing.

Take the same figures. I don't know what they show in terms of the increase in corporate donations or what have you, I'm afraid it would be the same sort of measurement.

MR. FICHANDLER: Even less. Even less.

MR. WARD: And what Bernie said is crucial is that maybe Mrs. Dowager or the wife of the president of the company may find that giving it to the Metropolitan Opera or some other symphony orchestra --

MR. GERSTEN: It's safe.

MR. WARD: Safe, yes. It may go that route while --

MR. FICHANDLER: Functionally prestigious.

MR. WARD: -- while other important institutions cannot even get a dime of that. It's too vagrant and it's -- it puts the artist always in a begging position of justifying the reasons why he must, why this corporation must give it to him, and it's on a yearly basis. There is no permanence about it. You go this year and then next year you go back and say you gave me such and such last year, could you give me more this year. And they decided, we've changed our priorities this year.

It turns us into total dependents on something that is too vagrant to even be worth it.

MODERATOR: Have National Endowment funds helped generate much new private money for theatre?

MR. FICHANDLER: Two years ago the Endowment said to us -- we asked them for two hundred and fifty thousand dollars -- we'll get it for you this way.

We will give you one hundred and seventy-five. We will give you the last twenty-five on a two to one match and we'll help you raise the last fifty to match that so you'll end up with two hundred and fifty. The help consisted of one meeting with Carl Stover and one visit with him to one organization.

We didn't raise the extra fifty thousand. We raised fifty thousand to match it, but it would have been the same fifty we would have raised without that challenge. It just wasn't there. Personally I think the three to one challenge grant is an abomination. It will help those organizations who have the --

MR. WARD: The machinery, the apparatus.

MR. FICHANDLER: And who haven't raised too much before because it has to be new money. We raised ten million dollars over the last ten years. Where the hell is new money going to come from in my area?

MR. GERSTEN: The whole point of the three to one challenge is, if the performing arts could raise the forty-eight million dollars, they wouldn't need the sixteen.

MR. BOS: That's right.

MR. WARD: My feeling is that it has to be reversed. There has to somewhere along the line has to be recognition on the part of first and foremost the government -- maybe I'm saying this because of my position and I get it from everybody else so I'm not totally unique. I get it in terms of being the Black theatre. We don't have access even to the financing that some other white theatres get.

So we, like Black people in general, I mean it's like work. You know, if we have to depend on getting the jobs from the private sector, I mean we see what the unemployment figures are. We have that same thing in the arts.

So, my feeling is that, I know that, the only salvation is to reverse this idea and make the government understand the essentiality of the institutions rather than the philosophy being, if we give, we give a nickel, that should urge you to get a dime from out there.

I'm not saying give it up. I'm saying that that present percentage or the philosophical approach to it has to be reversed and the government has to accept the responsibility of being essential in terms of its subsidy.

MR. FICHANDLER: And the reason for corporate giving is all wrong. The Chairman of my board is an important official at Chase

Manhattan Bank in charge of the Washington office. He cannot get a penny for his own theatre from them because they give their money in New York. Why? Because that is where they make their loans.

MR. GERSTEN: Not a final word, but my last word about corporate giving is, if we take the primary examples in New York of the great oil companies, they are giving the money to television where they get the exposure because they don't get it in the live performing arts.

MR. BOS: It's a great promotional buying.

MR. FEINGOLD: They're giving for the wrong reasons.

MODERATOR: What about the private foundation sector? Private foundations and institutional foundations?

MR. GERSTEN: Dried up.

MR. FICHANDLER: They're dried up.

MR. WARD: They changed their policies, you know, and the seed money --

MR. FICHANDLER: For three years the Mellon Foundation gave Arena Stage a hundred and fifty thousand, fifty thousand dollars a year for general support. Then their board said we don't like that. We want project. So they gave us a big grant which we had to use for new developments. Well, all this meant was we lost fifty thousand in general support. To use the new money we had to spend more money. We ended up behind the eight ball. We developed a good program, but our deficit has gotten much bigger.

MR. WARD: Ford has, at least for us, they have ceased to give programmatic support and now --

MR. FICHANDLER: Rockefeller is out of the business entirely.

MR. WARD: -- from cash reserves to this. I mean -- all of this, and therefore, the whole philosophy there was seed money which would get us all established and then we were on our own. So, we come right back to the same thing. We now are supposed to reach this ideal point where we are substantial, we can go out and now get it from the largesse of --

MR. BARR: Well, the problem is the same as it was and the reason that I invented the Theatre Development Fund was so they would have immediate money on demand and not go through a board of directors. And that that is the kind of fund that I'm talking about in general as opposed to foundation support.

MR. FEINGOLD: I have an additional point to make. It's the same one I've been making under every heading on your outline. Again,

it's the question, it's the capriciousness of this giving which is the first problem. There is no commitment to continuity. There is no commitment to permanence. There is no commitment to sustaining --

MR. FICHANDLER: No commitment to principle.

MR. FEINGOLD: Naturally. There are no principles. Nothing is sustained, nothing is permanent, nothing continues.

MR. BOS: Speaking from the State point of view, you mentioned the word earlier that it was the same as Darwinian. We ascertained this year in theatre, music and dance that to reduce funding across the board to the New York State applicants to the State Council was the height of stupidity.

I'm operating this year with three million seven hundred thousand less than four years ago. So, we are no longer a solution to the problem. We are part of the overall problem.

The Darwinian approach is simply, we have to put our money where quality is. Now, there is a lot of argument about what is quality because that's a highly subjective issue.

But, if I can use Shakespeare Festival, Bernie, as an example, which relates to "Chorus Line," they were fortunate enough to develop "Chorus Line" in the non-profit sector. It has now become one of the major instruments of support for that theatre.

And how did Council react to that? It cut their grant last year from seven hundred thousand dollars to three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Joe and Bernie say, you are penalizing us for success. They haven't said that but he can look at me and I can see that.

Nowhere in our legislation does financial need enter the picture and yet financial need is a subtext of all decisions that are made. So that folks that are in desperate trouble or emergency time somehow, you know, out of some kind of false humanity I think are sometimes getting help while people who could use what would now be additional money for new projects are getting hurt.

I mean I think there are probably parallels to that on the national level also.

MR. GERSTEN: I want to add a footnote that, from our point of view, a somewhat Pollyannaish interpretation of that move was that through our efforts we contributed to the other theatres of the State three hundred and fifty thousand dollars effectively.

MR. BOS: If you use the precedent funding level of the year before.

MR. GERSTEN: Plus or minus one way or the other. The program was essentially the same.

MR. BOS: Let us remember that our theatre allocation is being reduced every year --

MR. WARD: Which puts us all in a position where we finally are talking about penalizing Joe.

The problem really comes down in terms of the national advisory panel, what I find is that we are all put in the position where we are really scratching and scrambling for the samd diminishing and finite amounts. So what happens is that the artists themselves get put in a position of how to divide this pot.

And therefore, when it comes to the fact that Joe is making all of this money off of "Chorus Line" that means this amount we have, we don't have to worry about him, we can now divide this up where it's needed and what have you, which I consider to be a terrible position to be in.

MR. FICHANDLER: Which is why this whole popularist movement scares the pants off of me.

MR. BOS: Speaking for New York State only. We have, as most of you know, a per capita requirement in our legislation which says that the State Council monies are to be distributed at the rate of fifty-five cents per citizen per county.

I mean it's forced feeding and forced making art whether there are only forty cows and three people or whether we are spending too much in Syracuse and New York because -- our per capita allocation for New York City is eight hundred and some odd thousand dollars. We spend eleven million dollars.

By and large the legislators I've met with do not understand at all the grant-making process, the Council's policies towards the support of artistic excellence or anything. They believe that that dollar multiplied by the number of citizens is coming to them whether or not there is activity there to support it. So I've been requested for support from everything from bagpipe bands to marching bands. And we are trying inside to determine the difference between art and culture. I think this is probably happening at the federal level also. I'm not as close to that.

MODERATOR: Should federal funds for the arts be allocated on a per capita basis?

MR. GERSTEN: Heaven forbit. It would be like distributing aircraft subsidies money equally to Manhattan and California.

MR. BOS: Now, the other side of the coin, however, is that the role of government is to serve a people. All right. Now that is a very broad-based mandate. And I would say again for our own Council, in the past we have encouraged some of this legislation because there

was an intraspective New York City view. I don't pretend whether or not that exists in Washington, but I'm saying that we earned some of that. And the per capita hasn't been all bad because we've found some areas of support worthy but it is not automatic. It can't be formulized.

MR. WARD: I'm not knowledgeable about all of the fine details of the legislation and so forth, but I think -- I have nothing against the responsibility of any arts program in terms of the nation and the communities, you know, the regions and the counties and so forth.

I think that what happens is there is a rigidity, or the interpretation of it is not broad enough so that what happens is, maybe a particular county or particular area could be served possibly in some instances by an arts institution, a touring program of some kind from New York to within New York, outside.

I mean, it's just that it's given now that this, you know, this county has to get the money whether it has an institution -- whether it cares to have one. But I think there has to be some sort of flexibility in how the nation, the county and the region will serve, not necessarily that the money has to be given to this state, this county and so forth, and that's it.

The other thing, I think, is that in some way the appropriations eventually -- I'm talking about Congress -- it has to be taken out of the hands of the Congressional -- the politicians in voting, and attached in some way to something that has an ongoing permanence outside of yearly votes or what have you.

What I'm talking about here is -- if, for instance, the amount of money appropriated to arts came from a one cent tax on gas or something, and that the money was there, the source of it was finally permanent and then you can talk about how it should be handled, what beaurocracies to distribute it. But now, I mean, from year to year, you are dependent upon and fearful that the legislatures may not appropriate any more or how much and all of those things. I think some way has to be found where it has to be taken out of that sort of context.

MR. FICHANDLER: I think Dick made a very important point before that relates to this. Great theatres in the world have grown up about great individuals. Pouring money into an area is not going to give you something very good.

MR. BOS: That's right.

MR. FICHANDLER: In this case the chicken and the egg story doesn't work. There is a definite chicken that has to lay the eggs first and the chickens that have to lay the eggs are the institutions that can lay better eggs if they are given the proper support; more nutritional eggs, artistically nutritional and in every way beneficial.

MR. BARR: The big thing is an educational process to the Congress; the point being that the theatre, as I have pointed out earlier in the discussion, is absolutely individual in regard to the performing arts. It works differently; it's financed differently; and it's organized differently. It is done on the spur of the moment except for institutions which are working generally.

The thing that Congress has to do in my opinion is give the money where the permanent institutions exist and not worry about putting one in Nevada that may not need it.

That's the kind of focus and kind of education that, I think, has got to occur.

MR. FICNAHDLER: For example, the Guthrie Theatre serves a wide area.

MR. FEINGOLD: Seven states.

MR. GERSTEN: So does the New York theatre.

MR. BARR: I think you go where the theatre is. It it's a woman's theatre, then they should get it too.

MR. FEINGOLD: The woman's theatre exists because the women felt the need to have a theatre. Black theatre exists because --

MR. BARR: That's right because Black people -- You don't have to start new ones in order to --

MR. FEINGOLD: There are beginnings.

MR. WARD: In some instances they may be the creation of a --

MR. FICHANDLER: Take care of the ones that exist.

MR. GERSTEN: I don't think anybody suggests the possibility of a moratorium. We are not freezing new theatres out. They will rise and by all means they should.

MR. FICHANDLER: The Endowment doesn't support a new theatre until it's been in existence for two years.

MR. WARD: But talking about the ethnic theatre, of course they're major urban centers, they're major population segments where there is all around the country the desire and attempt to create Black theatre. They exist from amateur to semi-professional and so forth.

I think that that's a special question that has to be addressed just like we were talking about the multiplicity of everything else, starting from, unfortunate for Black theatre, starting from us who finally, you know, have survived up to this point.

There can be the same -- we can go to Atlanta to help serve the needs of the Black community there if the Black community considers that it's impossible for the existing theatres in that area to really serve it adequately.

There can be the creation or the support on various levels for theatre institutions there. I mean, I would not include just what exists as being the only, as being the end point. I think that those needs can be addressed and taken care of and special approaches also.

MR. FICHANDLER: The first step is an immediate need to sustain the existing good organizations so they don't die. And that's critical. And on that point I'm also concerned about this concept of more money going to the State Arts Council.

MR. BOS: Well, okay, that's my issue, this popularism. Dick and I just looked at the two words. A growing point of contention is called the word "professional," professional as opposed to non-professional, and what determines that. It's not just an Equity contract. American theatre is represented abroad by non-Equity companies which are in some cases the avant garde theatre leadership of this country.

Where we run into that at State Council is in a program that I have a great deal of difficulty in dealing with called "special programs," because if we are to respond to the ethnic theatre, if we apply the same standards in some cases as professional, we are going to ace out the funding. So, we are having a lot of trouble with that.

There are many of us who believe that the nurturing of ethnic theatre, whatever its color or type of, you know, female or male, belongs in the theatre program and that the theatre program should look again at that theatre as a whole swatch, you know. That's an issue that I think they'll face at the Endowment. The Endowment has been, I think, pretty good in dealing with professionals. They are not as close to the constituents as State Arts Councils. The State Arts Councils are making the grab. I work for one. They are coalescing their --

MR. FICHANDLER: I think that can be very dangerous.

MR. FEINGOLD: I think that one thing that people have to understand about this whole populist question is that art is essentially an urban phenomenon. It always has been. A major theatre is going to be started in a large city. And you have the fact that most Americans live in cities. It doesn't mean that the region around that city doesn't take cultural pride, does not have a recognition point in the fact that theatre exists in that city.

As long as you brought up the Guthrie, the Guthrie tours to eight states. We're going out for eight weeks with an O'Neill play at the end of the season this year. We would like to tour a much longer time and with more plays if we could. And we go into have-not areas all over

the place, in states like North and South Dakota that have no professional theatre at all and play for hundreds of audiences, sometimes for people who have never seen a play.

And this is a major illumination. It's -- from the fact that these institutions exist that you get the desire to start other institutions because, if the theatre from Minneapolis comes to Bismarck, North Dakota every year, the people in Bismarck, which is a fairly large city, will start getting a little embarrassed and say why the hell don't we have a professional theatre?

MR. BOS: Or hungry.

MR. FEINGOLD: Hungry. They want more of it than a four-day visit and one play.

MR. FICHANDLER: We feel in the District that we don't have to tour necessarily because people come to us from all over the country.

MR. WARD: Well, we went to the Virgin Islands.

MODERATOR: Is there any problem now with taxes?

MR. FICHANDLER: Oh, yes. Many theatres are still paying property taxes, amusement taxes; not profit theatres. We got rid of ours with Congressional help changing the District law. But until then -- I know that Minneapolis still has theirs.

MR. BOS: Pittsburg and Philadelphia for years paid ten percent amusement tax on all tickets over ninety-nine cents. It was only recently that they knocked those off. But those are local jurisdictional issues.

MR. FICHANDLER: Well, you know, the federal Congress can say we will give support to this area if they don't have this. They can put conditions on the granting. Also real estate taxes. They're talking now in the District of Columbia of trying to tax churches and non-profit organizations for their real estate.

MR. BOS: Tom, aren't there mounting a number of challenges from IRS as to the propriety of activity under 501 C 3 from everything from selling champagne to running a parking lot?

MR. FICHANDLER: Exactly. If you make a profit on your program advertising, they want to take it away from you.

MR. BOS: That's right. So that's an issue which obviously the Endowment should lead in guiding the IRS to a more specific --

MR. FICHANDLER: The postal rates with which they are threatening us with could kill us.

MR. BARR: Right.

MR. FICHANDLER: We live by our mailing. If we have to pay what they're talking about, it would increase our mailing cost prohibitively, we would lose our subscribers; we would die.

MODERATOR: Are there tax problems for the for-profit theatre?

MR. BARR: Every one that you mentioned plus, of course, in relation to us the taxes for people who invest in theatre a some kind of a depletion allowance or equivalent to the oil industry. Treat us like the oil people. We'll be very happy. We're already working on that, The League is. Obviously, the more directions it comes from -- but that's our specialty. We havethe real estate. That is the terrible problem. Real estate taxes, because it's the most expensive land in the world, are upwards of a hundred thousand dollars on an empty theatre. That's whether you have one week of booking or not. The Winter Garden is a hundred and eighty thousand or maybe it is up to two hundred now.

MR. FICHANDLER: In the District of Columbia there is a very special problem. So much has been exempt and the federal government's contribution does not make up the difference which it should do. I mean the District is scrounging for every penny it can get because -- it's a tripartite government. It's a city, a county and a state, and it has to serve all of those functions, and when they analyze and say the District makes so much money on its people, they forget that it's doing all these three functions.

MODERATOR: Do those of you in this discussion from the not-for-profit theatre support the removal of real estate taxes from the for-profit theatre and that it should be treated like the oil industry?

MR. FICHANDLER: I have no objection to treating the theatre like the oil industry.

MR. WARD: We are not in opposition to it.

MR. FICHANDLER: I think if all theatre were treated like the oil industry, there would be a hell of a lot of money for all of us.

MR. BARR: That's right.

MR. BOS: You can't present legislators with a one, Johnny-one-note approach. I mean, they are going to look at a request from commercial theatre for relief of real estate taxes as a precedent for any number of similar operations that will make the same request.

MR. BARR: But the commercial theatre is one of the major art forms. It happens to be commercial. That's what they got to learn.

MR. FICHANDLER: I wish the hell you could say that more money is lost every year than is made on Broadway. Then you would have an argument.

MR. FEINGOLD: It's probably true.

MR. BOS: We happened to be at the Shaw Festival recently together with some other people and the support from the province and from the national government is astounding. Therefore, there is a theatre there that is gorgeous. There are production standards that don't exist here. There is acting that you can't believe.

But if that were a commercial theatre, I don't understand how the province and the national government could give it money either directly or through tax relief.

MR. FEINGOLD: That's the most profitable theatre in Canada.

MR. BOS: I mean that is a problem for the legislators. I think we agree that the commercial theatre ought to get the same break as the oil industry because we value the theatre industry.

MR. FEINGOLD: We can have as many reservations as you would like about Dick's artistic view of the commercial theatre, and I have a great many reservations on that count. But in terms of his point about property taxes, I think he is absolutely right. It does not make that much of a difference to New York City.

MR. BOS: And New York City theatre, the Broadway theatre, if it went out tomorrow, would affect the restaurant, the hotel, --

MR. BARR: Everyone.

MR. BOS: The impact as we know it --

MR. FICHANDLER: Is this a congressional problem or a local --

MR. FEINGOLD: This particular one is a local --

MR. LeVINE: Well it's congressional if the Endowment or whoever put it into law they would only give money to theatres that were not paying, then perhaps the city and state could be convinced that that was the way to do it.

MR. FEINGOLD: In that sense it's appropriate.

MR. BOS: It affects nationally, Michael, because -- I mean, you can't ignore this -- the general public's view of first understanding of theatre in this country is called Broadway and we've got to understand that.

MR. FEINGOLD: I happen to be in favor of changing that. On the other hand, you know, if you give Broadway monetary relief, you know, by means of tax deductions and so on and Broadway is then willing to take more risks, to import more works from the resident theatres and Off Off Broadway, it's all to the good. To that extent we are all in the same boat.

MR. FICHANDLER: If there was no Broadway theatre we would be better off in some ways. We would have better actors available to us.

MR. FEINGOLD: If you look on Broadway as a means of channeling income into the non-profit theatres, that's the transfer of productions there, then obviously anything that encourages Broadway to do that is beneficial.

MR. FICHANDLER: Let's put it this way, in economic terms. Theatre in general we know is a highly labor intensive industry and very expensive to do. To compete, therefore, commercially with a manufacturing plant that can introduce machinery, it cannot do that. So, its costs keep going up. Inflation particularly hurts all of the performing arts and theatre even more than the movies which can make one thing and sell it all around the world.

So that theatre has an economic problem that is hurting Broadway and non-profit theatre equally. So, any assistance than can be given to theatre period is essential to preserve the art of theatre.

MR. LeVINE: I'm just going to pose a funny hypothetical situation to your hypothetical question about what would happen if the Broadway theatre closed, and build on what Doug said before about Olivier being able to maintain a company together with forty-four other Oliviers one of whom works every six weeks.

I think if the West End closed down and the movie industry in London closed down, Olivier couldn't afford to work in the company that he works in because what he does, he goes into something else during the day and he makes five thousand dollars, and he can afford to work for forty-two pounds a night.

I think that's what would happen.

When there was a strike in New York, the Off Off Broadway theatres were very, very upset because if the actors don't stay here, how are we going to exist?

MR. BOS: That's right.

MR. LeVINE: Showcase code notwithstanding. Where are we going to get the actors from?

MR. BOS: It's precisely the reason that we on the local level, why we at the Council are supporting the rebirth of the Astoria Queens field, because we can get film business there.

MR. LeVINE: Oh, I think that's very important.

MR. BOS: We help the actor drain.

MR. LeVINE: The one state that is trying to do something about that other than New York is New Jersey which has set up a motion picture commission with Sidney Kingsley as head to bring movie business back to New Jersey and then bring theatre business back with it because they know the two exist together.

MR. FICHANDLER: You know, this is interesting because the Mark Taper Forum is right there.

MR. BOS: In the middle of film.

MR. FICHANDLER: They find a great difficulty. Actors are refusing to tie themselves up for any length of time. They might miss a picture.

MR. LeVINE: You see the operative words there are "a long time." But if they only had to tie for six or eight weeks and you had enough of them so that you could get some of them to tie for six or eight weeks.

MR. FICHANDLER: Well, they're only asking them to tie up for ten weeks. But in those ten weeks they might lose a movie call.

MR. WARD: But it's the nature of Hollywood --

MR. BOS: It's the nature of this country.

MR. WARD: But, you know, it's different from London, basically in the sense of the actors there, even their appearances on the stage, even at the Mark Taper or even the other stage companies there are perceived almost as tryouts in many instances for movie or television.

MR. FEINGOLD: It's another of these instances where you are taught that quantity is quality. If you reach more people and make more money, than it doesn't matter what the hell you are doing or how good it is.

MR. BARR: Or what lasting value it has.

MR. FICHANDLER: I think the theatre in this country is at a very dangerous state; that, despite all the talk about the money the federal government is putting in, it is still much too small to sustain the efforts that have been going into it for the last two decades in developing this art form, and that there is proof that around the country our people want it. They are way ahead of their Congressmen. The Louis Harris surveys proved that. And Congress should react really in a substantial amount of funding to preserve this very important art form.

It's needed and it's wanted and Tom mentioned the Harris poll. Theatre is the growth industry in the arts at this point in history and it's got to be supported if we are going to have a culture and civilization that have any kind of value or meaning.

MR. FICHANDLER: Oh, I must add one other point I forgot. We have moved in this country to the point where the great majority of our workers are in the service industries, not only in mining, manufacturing and related industries.

Theatre is one of the few industries that can absorb manpower and we are going to be needing that tremendously. We see we can't get rid of our unemployment rate. Just purely on economic terms it's an area than can absorb if we develop it properly, put the right amount of money in the right places, tremendous numbers of people into gainful employment.

MR. LeVINE: I think the only thing I can say in summation is, the way I feel about it is that you must somehow convince Congress that the theatre is a necessity.

And that any necessity requires more and very different kinds of support when it is considered a necessity instead of an also ran. It isn't just an also ran.

MR. BARR: I would amplify what David said only by asking the Congress to give the theatre the same consideration, money and interest that they give to symphony orchestras.

MR. BOS: I would underscore the perception problem. Does Congress, do our legislators perceive the need for, not only theatre, but all art just in terms of its real importance. We tend to argue in Lou Harris and dollar terms today when the essential need is so much more important to the very sustenance of our society and our civilization. I mean, the history of mankind is told or remembered ultimately in terms of its Shakespeares, Bachs and Rembrandts, not in terms of those who acquire power and dollars.

MR. WARD: Well, I would just like to personalize my last remarks by citing an example that amplifies what everybody is saying.

I find that I'm a participating member of, and invited to most of them, of the top think sessions about theatre, and I find a great contradiction because I have to be very statesmanlike in giving my theoretical analysis and all of that. Yet the contradiction is that at this moment I go back to a theatre which has been deemed by all of the powers that be internally, externally, with the awards of great importance to the state, to the nation, I mean all of the various things; and I find, when I leave here, I'm literally going back to both sit at the typewriter and get on the phone to fight for the survival of an institution that has been deemed important.

I mean I think that's the great example that something is wrong because it would be one thing to say something was not even perceived as being necessary and important and you let it die, but I'm personally dealing with a situation where I myself and the theatre have been considered to be important and yet I don't know whether it can survive immediately.

MR. FICHANDLER: On our twenty-fifth anniversary Zelda put it in one little phrase: When will they give me the key to the front door?

THEATRE RESEARCH PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

ROUND TABLE

October 18, 1977 -- 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The League of New York Theatres and Producers

New York, New York

PARTICIPANTS:

Emanuel Azenberg, Producer
Earle Gister, Director, Leonard Davis Center for the Performing Arts
Stuart Ostrow, Producer
Jane Alexander, Actress

MODERATOR:

Robert W. Crawford

PRESENT:

Robert J. Anderson, Jr.
Sonia P. Maltezou

MODERATOR: Manny, what would you say is the present role for profit and not-for-profit theatre in American society today?

MR. AZENBERG: I think that, if we go back twenty, thirty, forty years, that the fundamental theatre existing in this country was what we would call profit theatre. Broadway was the Mecca and it was a business.

It did not have the competition, in terms of quality, with films. It did not have the competition, in terms of mass audience, with television, and indeed, probably the finest artists in the country participated in the theatre in that period. Now, wonderful artists participate in all three, and the theatre in many respects has suffered because of that, because of the economics of television and films, where every artist can make more money.

Since the thirties, the economics of the theatre has become huge, and non-profit theatre began to develop. It became very much more economic to produce a play outside of the Broadway condition. If it were good, bring it into New York, which is what everybody calls the profit theatre. A success in New York would mean a show that went all over the country.

I don't believe the label of profit theatre and non-profit theatre deserves as much argument as has been given it over the last fifteen years because the ultimate goal of both profit and non-profit theatre has been excellence. If it's good in non-profit, it is good in profit; and if it's bad in non-profit, it's bad in profit. We hide under those umbrellas just to satisfy our own particular philosophies of the moment. People who are in non-profit theatre stand very self-righteously as opposed to people in the profit theatre; and

the people in the profit theatre in some instances stand very professionally against the quote less-than-professional regional and institutional theatres. This is not a value judgment in any way. It's an observation.

I think there has been much more of an amalgamation of both profit and non-profit institutions over the last seven or eight years. We have discovered our needs are mutual and that our fundamental problem is the dollar, whether you have to raise it from the Ford Foundation or the National Endowment or you raise it from individual investors.

A major change has occurred in the so-called profit theatre in that the major investors these days are institutions of some sort or another. The Shubert organization is an institution. The Nedelander organization is an institution. The Royal Shakespeare Company is an institution. The Long Wharf is a non-profit institution. Civic Light Opera in Los Angeles; those are the fundamental producers of plays on Broadway. Broadway is no longer a producer as such. It's a presenter.

Shows exist in other places, be it England, Canada, Arena Stage, Houston; that's where the plays are initiated and that is very healthy for the country.

In any case, we have today less of an argument of profit and non-profit than we had before and I think much more mutuality of problems, some of which are artistic, some of which are competition with other media, and some of which are financial.

MS ALEXANDER: I feel that my contribution can probably be best made speaking from what I know best, and that's the acting point of view. I perform both in the non-profit theatre -- what they call non-profit regional theatre -- and I perform in commercial Broadway theatre. The difference in what I get paid is extraordinary. I get paid at least ten times more in commercial theatre. So, that makes a difference right there. And it's not just being paid, because I come from a background of regional theatre and I love to perform in group theatre. It's a matter of my time.

So, the theatre for me is not just doing a whole lot of plays any more because I really can't make a living doing that. If I could, I would go back to regional theatre now. It's finding the one role, which I always weigh against do I want to do that one role and give up my time in films and television where I get mostly better roles offered -- a wider variety.

This all comes down to the playwrights as well and who they are writing for. My husband is a director and I see the problems he has with casting shows. It's the same thing. The artists are being lured away to film or into television.

Manny said that thirty years ago we, as entertainers, were in theatre. But now it's all changed. So, it becomes a special event. It's a special event I feel for the playgoer. It's also a special event for the actor. I'm talking about myself. I have choices. Most of my fellow actors don't have any choices. In other words, eighty percent of my union at any one time is not employed so they'll take whatever is offered. That's where it is.

MR. GISTER: Today, obviously, the theatre plays an important role as the source of entertainment except that it's entertainment for, for lack of a better word, the elite as opposed to the mass because the mass audiences find entertainment through television and film. It takes a bit more effort and everything else to go to a play than it does to turn on the television set and sit at home and watch it. Consequently, theatre sorts out its audiences one way or the other: Sorts it out by price; sorts it out by location; sorts it out by accessibility or availability.

Nevertheless, one of its functions is to entertain. And by entertain, it's not necessarily something that is not substantial or significant or deep. It can be. I mean entertain in the sense of involvement.

The role of the theatre in school obviously is educational. Theatre can perform an educational function in schools at all grade levels.

Theatre is also avocational. It has that role to play in society. There are many avocational theatres that do indeed present plays in front of live audiences for ticket price.

The theatre has the role of providing jobs. It's a business. That can't be overlooked at all. It's a source of employment for a considerable number of people of many different levels, both artistic and otherwise.

Then, there is that other thing called culture. The theatre indeed has a cultural role to play in our society and it stands along side the other arts in that respect. Perhaps it doesn't stand in the eyes of the public today as culturally significant as museums or symphonies or ballets because there is this mixture in the theatre of roles that doesn't occur to the same degrees in other art forms. I think that can confuse the uninitiated among the public. I think it causes problems.

I think the profit or commercial theatre plays a cultural role in our society no more and no less than the not-for-profit theatre. Indeed, much of the impetus, the cultural impetus, as Manny suggested earlier, still emanates from New York City and from Broadway. There is, I think, perhaps a greater degree of sharing now. That is, something being done elsewhere in the country being brought into New York City than happened before; but it's a two way street. I don't put culture only on the side of the not-for-profit group.

MR. AZENBERG: I don't know that Broadway is a philosophy. It's a location. And it happens to be located in the city that responds to theatre. If there were the five hundred thousand people who went to the theatre living in Topeka, then Broadway would be in Topeka. It happens to be here.

Broadway is not a philosophy vis-a-vis the non-commercial theatre. I think it is the same. It has different goodies, but it has the same fundamental goal. Bad Broadway is bad theatre, period.

MODERATOR: Does the profit motive, in contrast to the non-profit motive, have an effect on what is done in terms of theatre's role in society?

MR. GISTER: That bothers me a great deal because I don't know of too many people who select a play in order to lose money.

MS ALEXANDER: Right.

MR. AZENBERG: Either profit or non-profit. When you see that seventy-five percent of the plays and probably musicals that exist on Broadway now, initiated somewhere else, probably in the non-profit area, why did they come to the profit area? One, for greater exposure probably, and also for the dollar.

MR. GISTER: They are a viable product.

MR. AZENBERG: And that money more often than not does not go into the pockets of an individual producer. It more often goes back into the institution that started that project or that is going to use that money for other projects. The era of the buccaneer producer has ended. There are very few. By and large it is more institutional now than in the past.

MODERATOR: What should be the role of theatre?

MS. ALEXANDER: I would like to go back to money again I'm afraid because, as I said earlier, if I, as an actor, have to choose between the same play being done in a non-profit theatre -- assuming that the theatres are of equal caliber -- and a commercial theatre, I will choose the commercial production only because it allows me to live better. Once in a while I'll choose a small non-profit theatre to do a play in, because you don't find that many small theatres on Broadway.

I would like to be part of a group again, and work with some of my fellow actors, whom I think are extraordinarily talented, who now are living in Hollywood and will not come back to New York any more. It just doesn't behoove them to come back to commercial theatre and take the risk of flopping right after putting in a certain amount of time and after having moved. It's a large commitment. Your lifestyle has to change.

So, I would like to see non-profit or regional theatre able to pay actors something in the caliber of between thirty-five thousand and fifty thousand a year -- for a major actor -- so that you have a nucleus of ten in any company so you can get back to the company situation in these non-profit theatres. There is no way it can happen now. I mean you can get actors. I'm not saying you can't. But, there are a lot of very talented actors who have deserted the theatre, because they can't afford it. I hear it all the time. I hear it from the people in Hollywood. They are bored out there. It's very hard to do film and television. It is not personally fulfilling. That is why almost every actor you talk to who started in the theatre will always want to go back to it in their heart. They talk about it a lot. That doesn't mean they'll make the move or that they'll move their families. Because that is really what it comes down to -- the family problem.

MR. AZENBERG: I kind of agree with Jane as far as the artists are concerned. I know many actors who, if they weren't interested in being in a repertory company or company per se, would certainly come in and out of a company. Yes, allow me to do a play for eight weeks and rehearse correctly with a very professional cast and knowing that I don't

have to sign a contract for a year because it's going to take six months to recover the initial costs and then we have to make profit. The actor must develop his craft, and he develops it on the stage.

MS. ALEXANDER: Right.

MR. AZENBERG: And without that opportunity our actors lose. You stay away from the theatre for four or five years and you are not as good as you were before. I mean, it is a craft. All crafts have to be honed and you have to stay at it.

I'd like to say something about the entire country. I think somebody should do something, whether it be municipal or federal government, concerning the lack of facilities to play in major cities all over the country. I'm working on "Chorus Line" right now and Neil Simon's plays and "The Wiz" and there are cities like Portland, Vancouver, Portland, Seattle, Houston, Dallas, New Orleans, Richmond, Memphis, and Atlanta where there are no facilities to play.

Yes, there are municipal auditoriums, but Van Cliburn is playing on a Tuesday and Lorin Maazel is playing on a Friday, and that ends that. You can't go in there. There are very few places that you can do plays in that make some sense because they are either eight hundred seats or four thousand seats.

There should be facilities for plays and musicals beginning anywhere, whether they initiate in New York or whether they initiate anywhere in the world. They should be able to play fifty cities in this country and they cannot. Subscriptions can be developed in those cities. For whatever strange reason, there are thirty thousand subscribers in Detroit. In one year, under some new organization, there are now thirty-three thousand subscribers in San Francisco. And you can't get arrested in Philadelphia and Boston any more and Cleveland and Saint Louis and Kansas City and Houston and all of those cities that have a demographic name millions of people. Is it so much of a demand to ask for a city of two million people to have sixteen thousand couples willing to buy tickets? Every show in this country will play in those cities.

Why not build two theatres, one that has fourteen hundred seats or twelve hundred seats and one that has two thousand seats. And then the musicals can play in the two thousand seat theatres and the plays can play in the smaller theatres. It doesn't matter if the plays come from London or come from their own area or they come from Cincinnati going to Washington. They don't have to initiate in New York.

New York can very well in many instances become a touring town. It does not have to initiate touring. What if I said to Jane Alexander: listen, why don't we play Washington, Cleveland, Cincinnati and New York? We'll play each city for six weeks. That would be acceptable.

MS. ALEXANDER: Absolutely.

MR. AZENBERG: But you can't get into these cities. The demographics of the country have changed. People have moved to other areas, certainly to the south and southwest. I challenge anybody to find a major live show that played Phoenix and Tucson. What they wind up getting in those cities are one-night stands from second-rate Broadway companies. The level is dreadful.

But every once in a while, once every two years, some enterprising city or enterprising person goes into a town and says we're going to bring the theatre here. They did it in Miami in twenty minutes.

MS. ALEXANDER: Knoxville is starting one.

MR. AZENBERG: Louisville has a small little company. For example, a very commercial show that existed under the non-profit banner, "Chorus Line," a musical of quality, or "The Wiz" which purportedly is black and appeals to a black audience which, by the way, is totally wrong -- sixty-five percent of the audience for "The Wiz" is white -- can't play in many cities. Pittsburgh is another. I have called up people and said, anybody want to promote it in this town, I will be there. Tell me I can play in your city. I'm not worried about the money. The people will show up. Just clear a place for me. No.

Then you find places like Lakeland, Florida -- unheard of. But it has a twenty-two hundred seat theatre that nobody has used. So we are going to take every one of these shows and we are going to play there. And in the next year, if it turns out to be wonderful, we will just turn around and say, see, there they are.

The inner-city situation has affected the theatre inordinately. The people are afraid of the inner-city. So that the cities which have been historically theatrical, Philadelphia, Boston --

MS. ALEXANDER: New Haven.

MR. AZENBERG: -- The Castle on the Hill in Washington, the Kennedy Center -- you go in an armored car, eat dinner and go back to Bethesda.

Boston has to be a case in point as well. Philadelphia. I mean the decay of the inner city has affected the theatres because the theatres have existed historically in those cities in the inner city.

The theatres that seem to be burgeoning are the theatres that exist outside those ghettoes. Los Angeles has now become unbelievable. There are not enough facilities in Los Angeles to cover the theatrical enterprises.

We are really making it our private effort, in our own way among three or four people here, to revitalize towns like Kansas City and St. Louis and Cleveland by taking all of the shows in any one year -- "Chorus Line," "Wiz," Neil Simon and putting them all in one city in the same year to say, look, they will come. Let's organize those cities either municipally or otherwise.

Some cities are very difficult to get into because of the municipal auditorium situation and some cities foolishly have a colossal tax system by which they take eleven percent off the top as city and state tax. Well, you just can't survive that way. That is the margin of the, quote, profit.

I'm running into this specifically right now because I'm dealing with, for lack of a better word, product that is eminently acceptable to the public and I can't get to the public.

MS. ALEXANDER: Because, as I said, at any given time there is such a high unemployment rate in our Actors Equity union, this kind of expansion of theatre would only help us, and that is something.

I do believe, like Manny says, that there are audiences for these events, particularly in the urban areas. And it will just employ more actors which is really necessary or all of these people's lives go down the drain half the time.

MODERATOR: Are you saying that these would be touring companies of top quality?

MR. AZENBERG: Yes. I'm not referring to anything cheap either in dollars or in artistic value. I would love to have Jane Alexander instead of somebody that nobody ever heard of and who has one-third or one-tenth of her talent to play cities that are not chic at the moment but will be chic five years from now because somebody has proved that it's all right.

I would say to Jane, we are not going to play a bus and truck tour where you would play one-nighters, get back into the bus and go to sleep to play another one-nighter somewhere. But we'll say, Jane, would you do sixteen weeks on the road. And then we'll replace you, because you don't want to devote your life to this one show. And she would be much more amenable to that than to playing split weeks here in a selected number of cities.

MS. ALEXANDER: And you see, I don't feel it's a question of talent. I think that there is enormous talent in our union and it's not because of lack of talent that eighty percent of them are unemployed at any time. There is not the opportunity. And, as Manny also said, you have to work to hone your craft. So it will all just get better the more there is.

MR. AZENBERG: How many stars do we know that are in their twenties? None, except the inordinate personality that --

MS. ALEXANDER: Andrea McArdle.

MR. AZENBERG: -- that murders everybody.

Andrea McArdle, right

But unless you really work at it, you stop. You can become a movie star by looking beautiful. But that is not what we are talking about. We are talking about artists.

MS. ALEXANDER: There should be more theatre, more jobs for actors and better acting.

MR. AZENBERG: Actually, if you look at it, the best actors we have in the country, even some of the great personality actors in the country, all started in the theatre.

MR. GISTER: Sure. That's the whole thing.

MR. AZENBERG: If you want to run those names down, you'll go Dustin Hoffman, and Robert Redford --

MS. ALEXANDER: And they want to come back. Given the right conditions, they want to come back.

MR. AZENBERG: -- Walter Matthau. You don't see them on the stage any more.

MR. GISTER: I think the role of the theatre as it should be or what should be the role is the same as the role is except how can you do it better and how can you make it better. And I think that's what has been talked about.

The theatre has to become more accessible. It has to be more accessible to the people and it has to be more accessible to the artists. It's one of those terrible situations that you can't provide it for the people until you can make it happen. You can't treat the theatre as a business which it must be treated as and ignore all of the problems involved. Somehow or another things have to be worked out where those problems can be resolved or they can be made less difficult.

One of the problems is where do we play. You can't pursue a business if you don't have a place to sell it. You can't do it out on the street, not all theatre at least, just some of them.

So, it has to be made more accessible because it is a huge business. And it must provide opportunities for those people who wish to make that business their lives, the wherewithal to develop and grow and to make the theatre better. An actor can't just move in and out of it. An actor has to have the opportunity to grow and develop, and that can only happen in a stabilized situation. And right now the theatre is not stable not even in the not-for-profit world.

Now, it's simply meeting one problem after another day by day and, consequently, very frequently long range planning has to be set aside --

Seattle, by the way, is getting a new theatre. At least they just floated a bond issue for one that was approved. Whether or not that theatre will be appropriate for tours, bringing in road shows, I don't know.

Seattle has been in what one would call a very stabilized situation. They have been selling out for the last six years, but they can't pay the salaries, not with the size house they have, not with the ticket prices

that they can charge for that size house. So, they have a particular problem there of trying to rotate the actors so they can continually introduce new faces. It's just a terrible situation to keep the box office going. That is one of the necessities of that town.

That does not create a condition that will permit people to focus in on what the theatre should be. They have to focus in on what it can be day by day by day by day. And the theatre should be the finest theatre in the world. That's what the theatre in this country should be.

There is no reason why it cannot be the finest theatre in the world. Why do we have to have people go to Russia and come back and tell us that they have never seen theatre like that before?

They, theatre people mind you, like Alvin Epstein, write articles for The New York Times saying I've never seen anything like that in my life.

MS. ALEXANDER: Berlin Ensemble.

MR. GISTER: But the Russian trip I guess was just mind-boggling in terms of a play being worked on for six months, and he walked in to a dress rehearsal which was held three months or two months before the opening, and everything was there. It was being played to the hilt, full out, and the director was just looking for one little thing more that he wanted in a scene. He had two more months to realize it. And it was total ensemble playing. So that that company, if you look at the group of people, the people who were playing the quote smaller roles, were just as fine in terms of acting ability as the major people. But that can only happen in a very stabilized situation.

But in some instances plays need long rehearsal time. And yet the constraints, the financial constraints, don't make that possible, don't permit it.

It's getting back to accessibility. More shows should be able to run longer in New York than now. Well, the ticket thing has helped somewhat in that situation. Maybe we need a massive dose of that to keep certin shows playing longer.

In New York City the theatre is not all that accessible to certain economic classes in the City. It just costs too much to be able to go. That's unfortunate, very unfortunate particularly in a City that is the major theatrical center of our nation. And it can't serve a major portion of the population of this center even if the play played for I don't know how long because eventually you come down to how much does it cost for me to go there.

MODERATOR: If an objective of the for-profit theatre is to provide a return to an investor, be it individual or group or whatever, is that a potential conflict with accessibility?

MR. GISTER: It is a problem. And we have to see it as a problem. It's a problem, of course, for the producing organization. They

certainly can't give it away. That is not possible to be done nor am I suggesting that it should be done. Maybe there is another way to help resolve that problem.

MR. AZENBERG: In line with that, let me tell you about a very simple isolated story which may have greater implications than I can at all think of.

My wife and I have participated in a project involving the theatre, of taking twenty community college students whom we would all classify as derelicts, sixty-six averages out of high school, limited horizons, no self esteem, classic guetto situation, not particularly Black or Hispanic, but white working class as well, who, if they get a job with Brooklyn Union Gas sometime in their lives will have achieved their level. And over a one year period, in three different years, using the theatre and the arts as the initial catalyst for, number one, getting out of the block, out of the neighborhood, coming downtown, going to see something; that participation made them more articulate, more aware of themselves, more in touch with their own feelings. The end result, which can be documented, was that seventy percent of those students wound up in four-year colleges. I would think that of the seventy percent, sixty to seventy percent were on scholarship. Two are finishing Princeton with an A minus and a B plus average on scholarship. One was on welfare with two children and the other was a two hundred and twenty pound Black girl who had an arranged marriage at age eighteen and was a secretary, is now finishing her first play at Princeton and running an A minus average.

And all of that began with, oh my, look what I saw on the stage, and then they talked about it.

Seventy percent have finished other schools, in addition to state colleges. They have finished Amherst, Princeton, Brown, and various other Class A universities.

Their self esteem is colossal when they discovered that they could do that, that they could do something, that the world was not a mystery. Just getting them downtown.

And the anecdote you can attach to this, it took eighteen months to get one particular Black kid to go to the ballet because it was a fag trip and he wouldn't go. After eighteen months they got him to go. They saw Alvin Ailey's "Revelations." Someone turned around to him afterwards and said, hey Ned, what do you think? He said: "Wow, that was terrific. Too bad they call it ballet."

The preconception of the arts, of the theatre, ballet, opera, is an elitist preconception and that should be broken down. My God, we are getting enough indication in the Black community that there is a colossal Black audience in this country. They show up for what is part of their culture. You can't take them to see "Mame" or "George M" or My Fair Lady." But you can take them to see "The Wiz" and "Does a Tiger Wear a Necktie."

MS. ALEXANDER: And "The Great White Hope."

MR. AZENBERG: And "The Great White Hope."

MS. ALEXANDER: In droves.

MS. AZENBERG: And the responses are overwhelming

And when you take a kid who is stoned seven days a week and is now working as a manager for the Shubert over a four-year period you have made an interesting contribution. And the theatre, without question, was the catalyst. I mean it's all in a document.

Talk about roles. If you make theatre accessible to everybody and not such an elitist trip -- and, in fact, it took a ton of effort to get the City to provide a bus to come down from 116th Street, 114th Street and Lexington Avenue to go see something because they didn't have car fare.

MR. OSTROW: Well, I've had some experience with commercial theatre and eleemosynary theatre, both. Recently I've started the work process, I think it's a seminal process, in the Kennedy Center in Washington, a musical theatre lab which is devoted to supplying some answers to why we continue to bore each other to death on Broadway with old fashioned forms and ideas and people. And to some degree I've been able to answer some questions for myself about the form and about people.

But I must tell you, after three years of funding, I find that even though we've produced a body of work -- something like twelve or thirteen original shows, of which three or four have already gone on to the commercial opportunity and by the most unlikely people, from Arthur Miller to two young Israelis who walked into my office -- I find that, by and large, the greatest stumbling blocks we have are the unions who continually make it harder and harder for us to exist, notably Equity.

As a matter of fact, as we talk right now we are going to the Equity Council today to plead with them not to charge us a hundred and fifty percent increase on what we have to pay actors to perform in musical theatre lab where we admit a hundred people a night free of charge, the sole purpose of which is to provide an intelligent, aware, sensitive, enthusiastic audience for playwrights, composers, actors, lyricists and producers.

So, there seems to be something wrong when somebody makes a suggestion and it doesn't work out because of the politics of the situation. I guess politics is the only word I can think of. Obviously I'm emotional about that issue right now because I'm right on top of it.

But I guess if I have to plunk for some advice, take it for what you want, I would say to find the best artists in the country, whoever they are, and subsidize them and give them the money and let them do what they want to do. I have a feeling, when you get attached to groups, you get into big trouble. That's my thesis at least at this moment.

I plunk for the artist, very much so, having experienced what I did with the best of motives and will continue to do. But I find it is no different talking for a foundation than it is talking for the League of New York Theatres. I don't find very much of a difference. I thought I would. I've been greatly disillusioned and hurt by it. And more the pity, because I did it for the right reasons. I did it because I wanted to take some of the money I made and pay my dues to the Muses, and it didn't work out that way. I wasn't making a penny.

MR. AZENBERG: I suggested that there was a mutuality of problems in that we all run into ultimately the same problems, be it non-profit or institutional or regional or commercial.

MR. OSTROW: I'm sure there are arguments that can be made from Equity's point of view. They seem obvious --

MS. ALEXANDER: Well, this is very salient. When you have a union where eighty percent is unemployed at any given time, your union is going to work very, very hard to make sure when you are employed you get the most you can possibly get.

MR. OSTROW: That's their job.

MR. AZENBERG: Yes. And we keep coming to the same pocket each time and that's what the fundamental problem is. There are limited resources to underwrite or subsidize or pay or whatever the word is that you want to use, and we keep going to the same group of people. You go to a theatre owner or investor or institution, and we are just going to ultimately run out of those people because the economics are just not controlled.

Perhaps -- I don't know what the percentage is -- but probably a great percentage of the dollar spent goes towards necessary but probably non-productive areas as far as the project itself is concerned or the artist is concerned. To be very simple and it's a limited statement, but it's kind of dumb to be paying someone four hundred dollars a week not to pull a curtain. And then we sit and argue over twenty dollars here and twenty dollars for an actor or the royalty holder gets this. But that's very tiny. That is tiny. But there are many areas that we just don't have the strength to overcome.

MR. OSTROW: I sense that there is a growing awareness, if not a full-growth awareness, on the part of the theatrical community to consider funding by government or private sources as a right and they have begun to act accordingly and say, well, as long as that well-spring doesn't run dry.

The answer I got from Equity was, well, you got a lot of money. Put some more in. That was the answer. Now, okay. Fair enough. Well, I put a quarter of a million dollars in already. I don't have another quarter of a million dollars. So, who loses out?

But the attitude, it seems to me, is what is corruptive and what is destructive. And I have a sense that, when government gets into it with both feet, then the unions are going to have even a greater field day. That is my instinct.

MODERATOR: Are the eighty percent of Equity members who are unemployed at any given time actual job seekers or are they working elsewhere?

MS. ALEXANDER: Well, I don't differentiate because, if you don't wish to work, you're on withdrawal.

MR. AZENBERG: You know, it's also, it's a little distorted, Jane. Eighty percent of the actors are not working under Equity's jurisdiction. But some of those eighty percent are currently working in television or working in film.

MS. ALEXANDER: That's certainly true. But if you took the New York figures and, except for AFTRA, you'd probably get a pretty good idea of what happens to the actors who live around here.

MR. AZENBERG: I mean, you could be doing a commercial for three thousand a week in any one week and be considered unemployed as far as Equity is concerned.

MS. ALEXANDER: It shouldn't be difficult to differentiate. I'm a member of SAAG, AFTRA and Equity as a lot of actors who belong to Equity are. I'm taxed on my dues. Equity knows how much money I've made right across the board in all the unions. They trade that information with each other in order to figure out how much dues you should be giving during any given year. So, Equity should have that information on their actors.

MR. OSTROW: There should be an institute of --

MR. AZENBERG: Of the arts.

MR. OSTROW: There should be, you know, an institute of high accomplishment. Call it what you will. A place -- in England they call it the National Theatre. There should be a place where excellence is possible without compromise. Yes, a place -- well, many places is too much. A place I'll be happy with. It isn't just for the actors. I know I made a mistake when I said national theatre. I meant for theatre in general, for the live performing arts in front of a live audience. The ability for playwrights to see how far they can take their work as opposed to what they can get out of it.

It seems that more and more playwrights are concerned with what the end result is, not what the work is.

Actors have less of a problem with that because, and interestingly enough, the good actors work all the time.

Where composers, theatre designers --

MR. AZENBERG: Let's not make it "a place" because that would limit everything.

MR. OSTROW: I don't know. I'm not sure if there weren't some great Valhalla, everybody would want to get into it and that wouldn't be a bad thing.

MR. AZENBERG: And that would diminish every other one.

MR. OSTROW: No. Just encourage other people to grow because there would be something to aim for. We don't have that here. We don't have that temple of the gods, you know, where you went up and found out about the secrets of life.

MR. AZENBERG: I would love to see about fourteen companies.

MS. ALEXANDER: I agree with that.

MR. OSTROW: But, let's get one. Let's get one. You can have fourteen after you get one.

MR. AZENBERG: Well, if we did that, everybody would want to go to Wichita where we're going to put it on.

MR. OSTROW: I'm for the artist. I'm for the one spot. I think that art is very difficult to create, inordinately difficult to create.

MR. AZENBERG: When you say the artist, what are you referring to? Who is the artist?

MR. OSTROW: Any creative person: playwright, choreographer, director, actor, designer.

MR. AZENBERG: I understand it as far as the playwright and I understand it as far as workshop conditions are concerned. I'd be a little leery of saying, okay, Jane, here is a hundred thousand dollars and go act. Then the next question would be, where.

MR. OSTROW: No. But you could say we'll buy out all the television shows that you are going to do, Jane, for the next year or the play if you can give us a year of your time to work with Jerome Robbins and Alfred Hitchcock who have a project which we think is right for you.

And she says, well, let me read it. And she says, you know, you are right. But it's not finished. It's going to take a year to do. Now measure that against six or seven other people that you would like to have there. It's God's production which is what I'm talking about, being able to get the best American talent together, best of American art. Almost like an institute and work at your craft. Forget about what comes out at the end of it. I mean that's something you find out later on. Just work at it where nobody says we've got a theatre for you.

MS. ALEXANDER: You mean like Joe, what Joe Papp is doing downtown except that you would be paid for it --

MR. OSTROW: Exactly.

MS. ALEXANDER: -- in the workshop.

MR. OSTROW: I'm not sure what Joe is doing, but --

MS. ALEXANDER: Well, you can work indefinitely on workshops but you don't get any money.

MR. OSTROW: The point is, if the government is to get into funding, again, I come back to giving it to the artists. That's what I would do. And that's what I would urge because it's not going to come from any place else but the artist.

MR. AZENBERG: In many respects I agree. I would love someone to give Jerome Robbins a lot of money so that he could work for three years, because the outcome of that workshop will enhance everything because it will not stay in that little workshop. It would come out of it at some point and thereby benefit --

MR. OSTROW: The same way the government of France gave Peter Brook a theatre and money and said with heart, encouragement and love it said, here, we adore you --

MR. AZENBERG: I don't think it precludes any of the other suggestions.

MS. ALEXANDER: I just feel our country is so vast that to make it comparable in any way to one of the European national theatres just doesn't add up in my mind. I feel if you had one national theatre, where are you going to place it? Are you going to put it in New York, Washington, L.A.? You're going to lose artists all over the place because of the place.

MR. OSTROW: I couldn't care less where it is.

MS. ALEXANDER: Yes. Okay. Fine.

MR. OSTROW: I couldn't care if it's in Washington or San Francisco or --

MS. ALEXANDER: You mean like granting like the foundations do to individual artists.

MR. OSTROW: Yes. But in one place where all the people can work together on something.

MS. ALEXANDER: I see what you're saying. You are talking about a conservatory of some sort.

MR. OSTROW: Yes. Almost like the Advanced Institute of the Arts.

MR. GISTER: He called it an institute. An institute it is.

MR. OSTROW: Remember the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton? That's exactly what I've always dreamed of for people in the theatre. Someplace where you could go and find the best possible collaboration in the world.

MS. ALEXANDER: Yes. Well, I do feel that Joe Papp is doing that kind of thing. And I do feel that it is open to a lot of us to call him up and say -- but he's running out of space.

MR. AZENBERG: And money.

MS. ALEXANDER: And money. Absolutely.

MODERATOR: According to the data assembled by Mathtech, the gross statistics make professional theatre look healthy. Is that true? Dinner theatre figures are included.

MR. GISTER: That's very healthy as a matter of fact, dinner theatres --

MS. ALEXANDER: Dinner theatres.

MR. GISTER: -- but the work that is being done is not very good generally nor what I would like to see as representing the theatre of this country.

MR. AZENBERG: I don't know if there is an original play in the world that started in a dinner theatre, and if there is, God knows I don't want to go and see it.

MR. CRAWFORD: Okay. But the question is, leave dinner theatre out for a second, the same things show, as far as Broadway grosses are concerned.

MR. GISTER: When your best artists are leaving theatre for other art forms, it cannot be a very healthy situation. I just don't understand how it can be described as healthy.

And we have heard comment already earlier that, indeed, just look at the best -- not all of the best actors -- a lot of the good actors in this country are not working in the theatre. Then that has to say something about the state of the theatre.

MS. ALEXANDER: I would agree.

MR. GISTER: It is not providing them with a sufficient living. It is not attractive enough to them. It is not compelling enough in terms of their lives.

The same can be said about other artists. And that to my mind bodes bad things down the road.

MS. ALEXANDER: Playwrights. Goodness.

MR. GISTER: And writers.

MR. AZENBERG: I don't know how you can even consider the interpretation of that data as being correct when we are charging fifteen and seventeen dollars for a ticket to go to the theatre. That's obscene.

And if you want to make the gross three trillion dollars, you'll charge fifty dollars a ticket and we'll have eight people going to the theatre and they'll buy a box for forty thousand dollars and it will be limited to seventeen people that go to the theatre, and the theatre will be wonderfully healthy because eight million don't go. And not only in New York is it fifteen dollars. It's all over the place. And with fifteen dollars for the theatre you are limiting your accessibility slowly or quickly as the case may be. It shouldn't be that high.

And it's not that high arbitrarily, but because the economics have spiralled, and I think proportionate to the price of bread and basic commodities it's even less than that.

MR. OSTROW: And yet the theatre has never been healthier.

MR. AZENBERG: Healthier? Who said it was healthy? Well, if you want to go only in terms of the amount of gross --

MR. OSTROW: That's what we're talking about.

MR. AZENBERG: Then it's incorrect

MR. OSTROW: Wait a minute. Then we have to define our terms. The fact of the matter is that, the more the prices have been increased, the more the grosses have increased. The audience has not fallen off. It has even increased. I saw it start to increase in 1972 when suddenly we found a television audience for the theatre.

It seems to me that in direct proportion to our charging prices and our new trends, we've muffed again another opportunity by providing them and feeding to the lowest common denominator rather than the highest. We seem to be losing the opportunity again with this new audience to give them something other than revivals mostly and terribly unadventurous pieces of theatre.

MR. AZENBERG: Well, I don't know that that's totally true, Mr. Ostrow. I really think that there -- I can't judge -- I don't think it is as good as it was in the forties in terms of quality.

MR. OSTROW: No. Nowhere near.

MR. AZENBERG: Or in the fifties. But I think it's better than it was in the sixties. I'm talking about almost everything. I think that the advent and the burgeoning of the regional and institutional theatre is terrific. I think that is very healthy.

MR. OSTROW: I think if you look at most of the regional theatres' repertoire, they seem to be doing pieces that were distinguished failures on Broadway.

MS. ALEXANDER: I'd take exception to that.

MR. AZENBERG: I would also.

MS. ALEXANDER: I think it is significant in St. Louis they are doing a whole season of new plays because their subscription has been so high they can afford it.

MR. AZENBERG: And I think the Mark Taper does a lot of new plays.

MS. ALEXANDER: A lot of regional theatres are doing new works.

MR. AZENBERG: Louisville has done some plays. The Long Wharf has done some.

MS. ALEXANDER: More and more. The healthier the subscription, the more new works they do. That seems to be the pattern.

MR. AZENBERG: I don't think it's enough. And I think the regional theatre, the institutional theatre, is the only outlet left for the experimental play. I don't think it is by far sufficient, but -- I think all of that is a healthy step but will fall short unless it is buoyed somehow and expanded.

MODERATOR: Why does it seem impossible for Broadway to provide the opportunity for the experimental new play?

MR. AZENBERG: Let's just go into economics. And the economics make it virtually impossible unless you bring Robert Redford in in a new original play. It is fundamentally the reason why. And I'll go back to it. If you look at what exists in the so-called commercial theatre in New York, and therefore around the country -- in the commercial theatres around the country, you will find that seventy-five percent of the plays have initiated somewhere else. And they have gone there and then here.

Stuart started a project that tried to do that with the musical theatre. We have found ways to do it with the plays, albeit accidentally probably, in that a play will start at Long Wharf or a play will start at the Mark Taper or a play will start at Louisville, or a play will start at Buffalo --

MS. ALEXANDER: Or Joe Papp's workshop.

MR. AZENBERG: -- or with Joe Papp. But we haven't, except for Stuart and maybe one or two others including Goodspeed, there is no experimental major effort being done in terms of the musical theatre, development of new forms in the musical theatre. "Chorus Line" came out of that.

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MR. OSTROW: Interestingly enough, it seems to me that the artists who normally would have tried for Broadway, because of the cost factor, are now trying it at the regional theatre level. So, in that regard I agree about new work. But they are the same people here that are going there because it's less costly.

MS. ALEXANDER: Oh, without a doubt, yes.

MR. OSTROW: So in that regard the regional theatre does provide a kind of service. Interestingly enough they're beginning to get hoist on their own petard because their audiences, at least to my knowledge, are not as experimental as they used to be five, six, seven years ago.

I'm very interested to hear about a new program of plays in St. Louis. I'm fascinated. I have found them more and more reluctant to be adventurous and much more, they operate much more -- especially the Taper -- operate much more like Broadway than they ever did before where now you have Doc Simon opening up at the Ahmanson Theatre. You have Liza Minelli opening at the Music Center. It's not all non-profit stuff.

MR. AZENBERG: You must differentiate that from the Taper. Almost everybody will try and mitigate against the economics of Broadway one way or the other if you can.

MR. OSTROW: But yet the public is the one that is paying for it. I get confused. One is a non-profit and one is profit. How do you split that?

MR. AZENBERG: I don't -- well, in the previous discussion I personally just don't accept those umbrellas -- of profit and non-profit. If a producer takes a seventy-five thousand dollar salary under non-profit status and then doesn't take his profits, whether they come or not, and then declares himself non-profit, well, fine. If you want to call yourself -- I'm wearing a brown suit or blue suit but it's the same body underneath it.

I think that argument is diminishing, as a matter of fact, because everybody is drifting into the shows that are done very often in those places with an eye to what we can do with them subsequently.

MR. OSTROW: Yes. That's what I meant. It's more of what we can get out of it as opposed to how far can we take the work.

MR. AZENBERG: Part of that reason is also the economics. I mean, if a man puts on a show and it runs six weeks and costs a hundred and fifty thousand dollars and it's a built-in seventy-five thousand dollar loss, one would look to try and improve his economic position. And the good part about that is that they do improve if the money does not go into individual pockets as it did in the buccaneer producer days. It goes back fundamentally into that institution for more shows.

MR. OSTROW: For more seventy-five thousand dollar salaries.

MR. AZENBERG: Well, in some cases, yes.

MR. OSTROW: I don't believe that, Manny. I got to tell you. I think it gets to be a larger bureaucracy than you could ever imagine in this room.

MR. AZENBERG: That is part of the price you pay, but indeed some of the money goes back into --

MS. ALEXANDER: Oh, yes. It generates other things.

MODERATOR: Assuming availability or dollars what should they be spent on?

MR. AZENBERG: Stuart brought up an interesting point. If we took the major major artists in this country -- and boy that's an argument that can go on for twelve years, also who are the major artists, but I think there are some we can all agree on, that the creation of a Jerry Robbins' workshop wouldn't bother anybody.

That facility discussion wouldn't disturb anybody either, I would venture to say. I'm not talking, mind you, about three thousand seat opera houses that you put two-character plays in. I'm talking about facilities that plays can go into, and if we take "Chorus Line' as an example which at least began in a workshop under conditions that were artistic and they worked at it and developed it and it became a commercial hit for a non-profit venture. Let's give it that label.

And we would like to show this musical to the entire country. And I say to you that fity percent of the major cities in the country do not have a facility for us to play in. That has to be dealt with.

Why can we not play those cities that I mentioned before? Because there is no facility for that musical. Indeed, there are no facilities in many of those cities for a play.

MR. OSTROW: I'm confused, Manny. You mean you wouldn't play "Chorus Line" in a city because it didn't have a facility?

MR. AZENBERG: There are none. We mentioned cities, for example, that do not have a facility virtually available at any time in the year unless --

MR. OSTROW: Does it have an audience?

MR. AZENBERG: Oh, yes. It's shocking. I mean, one never played Miami since the beginning of my life that I know of in any length and yet they built a theatre which is not totally suitable -- that twenty-eight hudred seat theatre of the performing arts or something -- and within a two-year period virtually every musical and indeed some plays have now gone to Miami and have done an inordinate, I mean stunning business.

"Chorus Line" played there for eight weeks. "The Wiz" will play there for five weeks. Straight plays are playing there for two weeks and grossing a stunning amount of money. And all of a sudden there's Miami. Well, it didn't happen all of a sudden.

MR. OSTROW: But that happened because the audience, by and large, moved from New York to Miami.

MR. AZENBERG: What about the audience that moved to Atlanta and Houston and Dallas and --

MR. GISTER: Phoenix.

MR. AZENBERG: -- I venture to say that St. Louis will go crazy.

MR. OSTROW: Well, that's fine for "Chorus Line" because "Chorus Line' is a phenomenon. But if you're talking about the mainstream theatre, I can't imagine that there would be an audience that would come --

MR. AZENBERG: Well, "Equus" didn't do badly down there. "Equus" didn't do badly. And whether I like the show or I don't like the show, is unimportant. The only way we are going to find out those things is to be able to send, not an occasional show to those cities, but a battery of shows to those cities so that you will like this and they won't like that, but the audience just like in the regional theatres, the Mark Taper and all, where you sell out your eight hundred seats for the season --

MR. OSTROW: They're under ideal circumstances.

MR. AZENBERG: -- they are going to say, well, I didn't like this one but I liked that one but the other group liked the first one and didn't like the second one. And maybe within a five-year period they'll say, well, that wasn't bad. It was interesting. "Equus" went into cities and is now acceptable. Five years ago "Championship Season" played those cities and it took them five years to recover from "Championship" because of the dirty words and some cities we couldn't play because they said we haven't recovered from "Virginia Wolff" yet. But five years from now they will have recovered from both of them. That's the way you change it by exposing them to it.

MODERATOR: Is there a need for a new facility for touring in cities that have resident professional theatre?

MS. ALEXANDER: Yes.

MR. AZENBERG: Oh, yes. I think there is no question about it. If I say to you right now that there isn't a straight play theatre -- and a straight play theatre is a smaller theatre, rather than a twenty-seven hundred municipal auditorium, in the cities that I mentioned where you cannot play in Kansas City, Houston, Dallas, New Orleans, Atlanta, Miami, Seattle, Portland --

MR. GISTER: The regional theatres can't close up to let him come in. That is one problem.

The other thing is that, so they might do it down the road two or three years from now. Why can't it be seen now?

MR. AZENBERG: The goal is to get Jane Alexander to do that down there and other quality people. Do you know how bad some of these second line shows are? Even the ones that come out of New York. Not "even." The ones that come out of New York. And the buses and trucks are a disgrace.

MS. ALEXANDER: Again, from an actor's point of view, I'd love to go on tour, and as a matter of fact, I don't care to play ever in New York more than six weeks.

This goes along with it too. A lot of the theatres that I've been in, including New York, as a matter of fact New York has the worst ones, are in such a state of disrepair that, as an actor I don't want to go into them. Literally, in Chicago, the Studebaker, I wrote to Jimmy Nederlander over and over again and I said, spruce it up. I mean I'd have to make an under-stage crossing and I had to be aware of whether the rats were going to run across my path, and it was dark and dingy and there were always roaches. And really gooky. So, I don't want to play in those theatres and the audiences don't want to come to them.

We had what we called an edifice complex in the sixties about building new buildings. But by and large those buildings have proven themselves, I think. I don't know the statistics. But people want to go to them more than they want to go to the old Studebaker in Chicago.

MR. AZENBERG: Look at the Kennedy Center in Washington.

MS. ALEXANDER: The Kennedy Center, the Music Center in L.A. have become events. People will go to them because it's interesting, it's exciting, it's part of the thing to do.

I think you get the real estate people in these cities involved and show them it's a viable possibility that this theatre can make a profit and yet enable them to build new buildings.

Now, suitability of buildings is the other thing because most of them say, well, let's make the most buck we possibly can and they build these three-thousand seat barns that an actor can't communicate properly in.

The rule should be that anybody in any seat should see the expression in the eyes of the actors at any time on stage. That is not a twenty-seven hundred seat theatre unless you are talking about the beautiful old ones like The Colonial in Boston or something, you know, the gems.

But most people don't know how to build those today.

So, you're talking about a twelve or thirteen hundred seat house, I think.

What do you say, Manny?

MR. AZENBERG: Sure. I'll give you I think almost an unalterable statement. Unless a city has a theatre that can support a play, you cannot develop a subscription in that city, you cannot develop an interest in that city because there aren't enough of the big popular musical numbers around to generate that interest.

You must have a facility that a play can go into. So, if you are going to sell six productions to the public in any one city, three, four, five of them must be in a small theatre.

MR. OSTROW: This is for the record. I see the value of that. I don't think it's a paramount problem.

MR. GISTER: Well, I think there are other problems that one has to address along with that.

If we are going to build theatres in communities which will then again draw into those theatres a substantial part of the population that is at the upper extremes of the economic scale, then I'm not too sure we are indeed making it more accessible. We are serving a particular area of the public that has access pretty much anyway. And I'd like to see those theatres, if they're going to be constructed, open in some ways to people who don't normally get to that theatre.

MS. ALEXANDER: I'm talking about revitalizing the urban areas of our country which, if you have visited them lately, are really blighted. I came back from Buffalo today. You would think a bomb had been there.

MR. OSTROW: You are not going to get a first class company and reduce the ticket price.

MS. ALEXANDER: Okay. The Music Lab at the Kennedy Center. That was accessible.

MR. OSTROW: Because it was funded by me. Of course I didn't charge admission. I tried to do the dream. I just tried to get the best professional artists I could together to deliver a work to the satisfaction of the artists and that the audience was there as an instrument. And that was all. And the audience loved it.

MR. GISTER: You just said this couldn't be done because of something. And I'm not sure that that necessarily follows. Why, for instance, if the money is going to come from the government -- municipal, state or federal -- why can't built into that money be a requirement that certain things occur within that facility? Why can't there be a requirement for the municipality to make available to certain element of the population tickets at a particular price?

MS. ALEXANDER: Absolutely.

MR. GISTER: Why not?

MR. OSTROW: If you're going to charge four dollars a ticket to bring "Equus" to Atlanta, you can't break even.

MR. AZENBERG: You can underwrite certain ticket prices for certain groups of people. You have to be careful of that in that that group of people that we contend will not go because of the price, that's true up to a point.

MR. GISTER: Yes.

MR. AZENBERG: But it was always the contention for years in this City that Black people would not pay Broadway prices. We all grew up with that. That was not really the issue. The Black population always paid the going price for what they wanted to see. When you put a rock concert on at the Garden with Stevie Wonder, everybody showed up who made four dollars a week. God knows where it came from. I was with the Garden for awhile and we did a concert, the first concert which appealed to Hispanics, which was a concert by Raphael, some Spanish singer. The place was jammed irrespective of what the price is.

There is an area -- yes, one can be helpful in certain areas, but one should not think that that is the fundamental problem. The fundamental problem in terms of ghettoes, minority, other cultures is that you must do something that appeals to their basic requirement, their basic interest. You can't do "Auntie Mame" and expect Black people to show up. They will fall asleep. It has no meaning for them at all. And yet "Does a Tiger Wear a Necktie" -- those are young kids -- they couldn't afford it, that's true. And it was underwritten. That's true. But they went crazy emotionally to see it.

MR. GISTER: Those who went.

MR. AZENBERG: Those who went. So there is validity and yet there is a limitation.

Look at Washington. My God, the National Theatre, the audience that you can count on more than any other audience except for the elitists that go into that armored car. It's the Black audience in Washington.

You put on a Black show that has some meaning there and you got to get out of the way to buy a gicket. "Colored Girls" is playing in Washington right now which is an evening of poetry and the gross, the gross gross, the gross part of what you might call is not an issue. They want to see it period.

I mean "The Wiz" is a case in point in New York. Granted, pure entertainment. Granted, not great profundity. So, what is great profundity? I'll get into a major argument with you on that.

If "The Wiz: is satisfactory enough to bring tears to an audience of another culture, then it is satisfactory for them. It may not be Shakespeare, but --

I love it when TDF supplies the students in various schools around the country a ticket at three-fifty and four dollars. That's marvelous.

There is a limitation. But let's not make a grand assumption that the great big bulk of the nation doesn't have enough money to buy a theatre ticket. I think seventeen-fifty is huge and that should be dealt with.

MS. ALEXANDER: Liza Minelli is going to sell out at twenty-two fifty.

MR. AZENBERG: The same people go to a movie four four dollars.

MR. GISTER: And five dollars.

MR. AZENBERG: And travel from the neighborhood to do it. I mean there are theatres in this City which are designated as Black. They show movies "Where the Action Is" or "Uptown Saturday Night" is put into certain theatres and the Black public comes to them.

MS. ALEXANDER: If we have these theatres in other cities to go to, the actors will be there to go to them and at the prices that Equity is asking for, which are very reasonable. Road salaries are very good. That does not mean that you can live as well necessarily on the road as you can in your apartment in New York, but I think it's reasonable.

Now, you have a problem when you come to major actors who are making most of their living in Hollywood. That is probably going to be a problem forever. But I do feel that it should be put on some kind of a comparable basis so that they have a choice. But, you know, most of them don't even have a choice any more unless they are doing commercial theatre for a certain amount of time, Broadway.

I think I said earlier that I think it would be very nice if more of the major artists could participate in the regional and non-profit theatre, but if they do so, it's at such a loss in terms of their time and moving away, they just don't want to do it. That's why I said I would like to see some kind of substantial figure being offered them for a year's work in a regional theatre or something.

MR. OSTROW: I would like to make a suggestion. Manny made a previous one before, I've been making it for years. I'll try again. It has to do with actors and has to do with theatre.

I still think that New York is the only place where you do theatre and it's a shot fired around the world. And I can't see any place that's going to overtake that tomorrow notwithstanding all of the things that are wrong with it. There are a lot of things right with it.

I had spent some time with Mayor Lindsay on the concept of establishing, through subsidy or through intelligent inspiration, a film sound stage in New York where the actors would be allowed, where it would be possible to work like they work in London. They work in the theatre at night and work in films during the day. So there is an income that they can realy upon. God knows we have the communities, the surrounding communities to live in and the opportunity to enrich the theatre seems to me to be enormous under that possibility.

MS. ALEXANDER: Yes.

MR. OSTROW: I hope -- I know that there's a deep study available that Lindsay had which the City had put forward which got lost somewhere. But I still think it's the most productive idea I've heard in eight or nine years about how to help the theatre.

MR. GISTER: Where are they shooting "The Wiz?"

MS. ALEXANDER: In New York.

MR. GISTER: In New York. Where? Aren't they using the old Pictorial Center? The facility is there. It's here in New York City.

MR. AZENBERG: And they stole all of the dancers from the show.

MS. ALEXANDER: The problem is that the unions, particularly IA and the Teamsters, have priced themselves right out. It costs a third more to shoot a film here than on the west coast.

MR. OSTROW: Well, I think that the place to fight these prices and problems should be at the top of our form which I contend is here. I think that if you can lick the problem here and make this place function on equal artistic footing as it is financial footing, that from here is where you are going to build, and here is the place we have to take on.

I think all of the possibilities about Pittsburg are terrific and I'm all for them. I still think here's where it's at and this is where it needs the support, the inspiration, the muscle because it is muscle.

MR. AZENBERG: Yes. You're quite right.

MR. OSTROW: It deals with all the people that you just talked about. If there is going to be a revolution, let it happen here and now. The tree of liberty should be watered by the blood of patriots every ten years and we're overdue.

MS. ALEXANDER: Lindsay did have some very good ideas.

MR. OSTROW: Terrific.

MS. ALEXANDER: The only two theatres that were built when Lindsay was mayor unfortunately were the Uris and the Minskoff which

are enormous. Nobody knows what to do with them except book concerts.

MR. OSTROW: The idea was very good.

MS. ALEXANDER: His idea was, you know, to have a new theatre in every new office building in this area. Well, he only got those two and all the smaller ones that were coming up never even saw the light of day.

MR. AZENBERG: What Stuart, I think, is referring to, and if he isn't, I'll elaborate on it, is the revolution he is talking about is the colossal restructuring of everything.

MR. OSTROW: Yes. That is what I meant by revolution.

MR. AZENBERG: We have a colossal amount of wastage that we cannot avoid. We have some featherbedding that we can't avoid. We have an imbalance of payment. We need a definition of, quote, profit, whatever that means. And if you ask me my goal in the pie-in-the-sky, give me a czar who knows something instead of a lot of people on so many foundation boards and so many -- with all due expression, National Endowment and state endowments who are appointed by the cute guy from the upper East Side, and his friend comes in and he knows nothing. Here's two hundred thousand for you, you only get twenty, you -- I like you -- get thirty. He's a friend of so-and-so. He makes a phone call. And nobody believes this any more.

The profligacy in the quote non-profit makes the profligacy in the profit theatre minuscule.

MR. OSTROW: Talk about facility. I mean, give us fifty million dollars and tear down all of these old theatres and put up one big huge theatre center. You talk about taking facilities all over the United States, what about here?

MS. ALEXANDER: Yes. I agree

MR. OSTROW: This is the center.

MR. AZENBERG: It would mean also changing -- and we are really talking pie-in-the-sky right now -- but it would mean changing the rules we function by.

MR. OSTROW: That's when you change.

MR. AZENBERG: Changing who gets paid what and why. It means changing a lot of union rules. Changing a lot of royalty structures. Changing and protecting against the, quote, ripoff. It means dealing with brokerage, ice, that dirty word.

MR. OSTROW: Two ways. You can look at Lincoln Center --

MR. AZENBERG: It means doing all of that.

MR. OSTROW: One of the ideas that I just discussed, if there were an attraction for all of the actors -- not only the actors, directors --

MS. ALEXANDER: Writers.

MR. OSTROW: -- writers --

MS. ALEXANDER: Scene designers.

MR. OSTROW: -- and scenic designers; all the people that are making a living in Rome and in London and in Hollywood; if this became the center, the center of the world of the theatre, where people could work and make a very, very good living, that is one way of attacking the problem because suddenly you're going to have a lot of plays to put on.

The other has to do with revolution. And my feeling was that Robert Morse had the right idea. He took 42nd Street and started to put five or six theatres together. That to me was a nifty idea. And I'm all for it.

I think that's the way you're going to get new rules because you are not going to get new rules in the old places. You are going to get new rules in new places.

Now, it doesn't necessarily have to cost a billion dollars. It could be something like that.

But we need to move away from the entrenchment of this business. And the only way to do that is to be a revolutionary and go someplace else. It could be across the street. I mean, isn't it perfectly ridiculous that we don't have a theatre next to Bloomingdale's where half of New York comes?

MS. ALEXANDER: That's right.

MR. OSTROW: I mean, it's perfectly ridiculous.

MR. GISTER: They have movie houses there.

MR. OSTROW: You bet your life they have movie houses. There are about a dozen clustered in that one spot.

MS. ALEXANDER: Or that we don't have more matinees so that we can appeal to an elderly population that doesn't dare come down here at night.

MR. OSTROW: I guess what I'm saying is if Broadway were healthier artistically, the theatre in general, I think gets healthier artistically. That is not just a matter of pride as being a member of the New York theatre.

MR. GISTER: The whole thing has to be totally looked at again from a fresh point of view. All the unnecessary costs involved today --

and it's not just in New York City. It's anywhere you want to go.

MR. AZENBERG: Any time it happens here it's going to happen in every theatre across the country.

MR. GISTER: Right. It's a ripple effect.

MR. OSTROW: Sure. Everybody still comes here to see the new play. Win lose or draw, no matter how much every regional director may smirk at it, every once in a while magic happens and it happens more generally here than any place else.

I hope it will continue. It's less and less, but --

MR. GISTER: When you start talking about labor, when you start talking about unions, you are talking about something that Congress is going to throw up its hands in despair about.

MR. AZENBERG: It means -- and I won't use the word revolution, but it means a huge restructuring of virtually everything, and if you do it here, it will be reflected everywhere else. It means getting rid of as much debris and wastage as we possibly can. It means that the monies, from wherever they come from, should be used for much more productive reasons than we are using them now. And I must say that there are many people who try diligently to use it as best they can.

MR. OSTROW: I also think that it's an enormous amount to expect an answer for that question. I know at least -- I'm not capable of giving you an answer in an hour of what that question, the ramifications of that question could possibly be. Once faced with the opportunity of being listened to, I guess that's frightening. You have to consider your thoughts.

Maybe there should be a more thoughtful presentation made to you about this question. I got a letter in the mail from Hal Prince to show up. That's as far as my input was. I mean, if someone said to me you have six months to change the world, maybe will you take it on, can you spare it, maybe that would be a nifty thing. Maybe I'd like that.

MR. AZENBERG: I'll tell you that this whole problem would be easier to deal with if we were on the very edge of a colossal crisis and everything was going to close up tomorrow.

MS. ALEXANDER: Yes.

MR. AZENBERG: The graphs are not coming out right. If they are showing an awful lot of dollars, then when they fall off the cliff, they won't fall off gradually. What we need is a wonderful recession, and all of a sudden the money that exists here for million-three musicals and four hundred thousand dollar plays stops, and it can and it will at some point because it's obscene if one spends -- can you imagine what kind of a home you can buy for an eight thousand dollar set? A set made out of garbage that is put up there, you burn it twenty minutes after you close.

And you can buy half of Connecticut for what a musical costs.

MR. OSTROW: It costs you to burn it.

MR. AZENBERG: Yes. Now, if this were a time when all that money said, no more, stop, forget it. There will come a time -- I mean we have gone from a ten dollar ticket to a seventeen-fifty ticket and we are into a twenty-something dollar ticket where at some point it ends. And that's called falling off the cliff.

Then we're in a big crisis and the stagehands are out of work and the musicians are out of work and the actors are out of work, and the eight or twelve producers that are left close the institutions down and I'm going to go back to my grocery store.

MR. OSTROW: It is misleading to say that the health of the American theatre is in good shape because of your gross box office receipts.

MR. AZENBERG: And because of that particular figure, the last round of union negotiations were devastating. Forget about the actors now. There are pluses and minuses in there.

But nobody wants to deal with those coming realities because they are saying I have to get mine now. This is my year for a hit and I don't want you to change anything. Two years when my hit closes, then we'll talk revolution.

But that cliff that we are going to fall off is not too far away, because with a little luck I'll have my hit this year and you can call me in Connecticut and I'll be planting onions and potatoes, things like that, because I believe in my theatrical lifetime that crisis will happen.

I think when we sit and face a normal musical at over a million dollars, something has to be dealt with here.

And the only reason they look good up there is because we're charging, instead of ten dollars a ticket, twenty dollars a ticket. So he says, my God, we grossed six hundred and forty million dollars last year. Well, that's terrific if you only deal with that.

The amount of losers are as great as they ever were, maybe even greater. There are less efforts being made in the experimental area. There are no efforts being made on Broadway experimentally at all. They are cropping up in other little places and all of those little places are under duress financially. The all come begging to the same twelve hundred foundations and the government. And people are screaming to the national, to the federal government now. And saying, hey, what about -- hey, wait a minute.

Well, we have to disappear before that happens because there is no sense of urgency among too many participants at this point because

they are all making that inflationary dollar and it looks terrific.

We are not an industry. We pretend to be an industry. We are disorganized. We are a group of disparate people.

MS. ALEXANDER: We are an art form

MR. AZENBERG: And I would be a little wary of being totally organized by the same token --

MR. GISTER: One voice speaks for all. That would be terrible.

MR. OSTROW: Yes. If anything, the economists have taken over and we are dealing with economic problems instead of artistic problems.

MS. ALEXANDER: So we are talking about a diminishment of artistic effort so perhaps we get back to what you were suggesting earlier on that we encourage more artistic effort.

MR. OSTROW: Yes. The one thing I know will work, if you give a dollar to Richard Foreman, he'll show you something that you have never seen before. I know that is true. I know it's true.

MR. AZENBERG: That is absolutely crucial and important. And after he finishes that and says, now it's ready to be seen, the question is where and under what conditions.

MR. OSTROW: My feeling is that that is not a problem because the more art you create, the more people are going to want to see it. I think commerce always follows art and always will. I've never worried about that. That's something for the government to worry about, but I don't think we should be worrying about it. I really don't. I think our job is to try and create and stimulate art.

MR. AZENBERG: Broadway is not a philosophy and it does not necessarily have to have a philosophical position. It's a location. The art can exist anywhere. If you want to start your experimental theatre or the workshop anywhere it doesn't matter.

The minute you come out of that area -- that's one problem. Let's try and promote and stimulate as much art as we possibly can with as many artists and back them and give them the opportunity to work.

Once they have finished that work, it has to be seen by an audience. And when you take it out of that insulated environment and put it in another environment, call it whatever you want, that other environment exists in a population area so that that population can go. There must be some economic viability to it. so that it is not all loss.

You cannot just continually lose money because that will just keep going. Once they find out that the government is putting up the money, the pipe doubles. I mean, if you ever build a theatre, make the deals with the unions prior before you put that first block down. Not like they did in a number of theatres that we're all aware of. Eighteen hundred dollars a week for a guy who walks into the theatre, says hello, and leaves.

MR. GISTER: Aren't you talking about two things? You're talking about increased grants to individuals strictly on a one to one relationship, that is, the one being the Endowment and the other one being the individual; and the second idea, the institute.

MR. OSTROW: Yes.

MR. GISTER: That's what I thought. And I agree with both of them. I think that there must be more grants to individual artists.

MR. OSTROW: If there were an institute -- somebody said it, an institute for the arts, I can't imagine a more pregnant moment in theatre history at this time. I can't imagine anything more necessary than for artists to say, okay, I'm going to work here in the company of my peers: Martha Graham with, I don't know with George Segal. I think that is all very possible and important.

I think that the mentality of people in the arts today and their feeling generally about where to turn would be engaged by such a proposal. I think that they would get excited about it. You mean to tell me all the bills are taken care of?

MS. ALEXANDER: We are specifically talking about two people in the theatre. You are talking about playwright and director.

MR. OSTROW: No.

MS. ALEXANDER: You can't give an individual grant to an actor?

MR. OSTROW: Why not?

MS. ALEXANDER: You can't work in a vacuum. Unless like you give it to me for a one-woman show.

MR. OSTROW: It would be -- I mean, I haven't thought it all the way through, Jane, but it would be a company of actors who were chosen.

MS. ALEXANDER: Yes, I understand. But when we are talking about given a grant to an individual artist, the artists you're talking about are directors or playwrights because everything else follows.

MR. OSTROW: Grants should be given to one place representing the top of the excellence in the theatre. Not to form a National Theatre. It should be like the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton. That's

what it should be where Edward Sheehan can go up and write a book about the Middle East and takes eight or nine months off.

MR. GISTER: If you start identifying as a national theatre, you begin thinking about a producing unit. That's not what he is talking about.

MR. OSTROW: If Cheayevsky wanted to take the commission to do a play and he said let me have Fosse and let me have Jane Alexander and Richard Burton because it's a two-character play, and let me just see where it goes; if that were possible, it would be Valhalla.

MODERATOR: Do you now believe that the private sector foundations are a source of substantial funds for what you have been talking about?

MR. GISTER: I think they should be. And I think they can be. One thing that just grates me all to pieces is that they, art forms or the disciplines of film and television that make use of the talents of theatre ---. The theatre talents are originally trained and grow and enrich themselves in the theatre and then go off and the films make use of them and television makes use of them. Those two industries give less money to the art form that spawned them than anything else.

MS. ALEXANDER: That's changing now though, I believe.

MR. GISTER: How much?

MS. ALEXANDER: Well, CBS and ABC are getting into the game.

MR. GISTER: CBS has a foundation. That's right. You try and go through their door and get a grant. If they'll talk to you in amounts of more than four thousand dollars, you're lucky.

MS. ALEXANDER: Oh.

MR. GISTER: It's one of those little games. Yeah, they got themselves a foundation now. They pick -- they even pick certain projects that kind of feed back into their medium, which is okay. But let's face it, we're interested in the theatre and we're interested in finding private funds. That is a totally untapped area out there.

How do you confince them though that they ought to be plowing -- it's to their own benefit to be plowing -- money into the theatre because they're constantly raping the theatre for their talents.

MR. OSTROW: I was shocked to find out that I was one of the few people in commercial theatre who was doing something about it. And I'm still chagrined at that. But I don't know how you answer that question.

My foundation is the only one that funds original musicals in the United States, to the best of my knowledge. The Shubert Foundation does

fund directly to theatre people. And that's about it, folks, other than the National Endowment and the New York State Council. I don't know where else you can get any money for theatre.

MODERATOR: What about the private institutional foundations like Ford, Rockefeller and Mellon?

MS. ALEXANDER: Oh, they are phasing out.

MR. OSTROW: The only person I've known that really has been so impressive in this field has been able to raise money from private business for the purpose of the theatre. He does it in a very ingenious way because he includes everything. It includes ballet -- that's Roger Stevens -- he includes ballet, he includes opera and he includes theatre.

But he is able to put together just by sheer talent all of the corporate heads who are interested in the arts.

And he told me how he did it last year. He had ten of them who promised to pledge fifty thousand dollars make ten phone calls. And he came up with five million bucks in two days. He was unbelievable.

MODERATOR: There are a lot of people who have talked around the country about the enormous increase in corporate giving to the arts. Is this valid in terms of the theatre aspect of it?

MR. OSTROW: I know of none in the theatre.

MS. ALEXANDER: I think it's a great idea. It's certainly happening in a number of the television films I've done, the direct sponsors have been some of these large corporations and there is no reason why I think that they shouldn't be involved in the theatre as well, and this is where the government could come in and give them a break if some of their profits went to the arts, to funding specifically the theatre.

MR. OSTROW: I think that is a terrific idea.

MR. GISTER: I don't think there is any question in certain specific localities that an individual has been able to wrench loose from the corporations within that locality -- Pittsburgh is a good example in what Ben Schactman was able to do there with the corporations that had never given to the arts. How long he is going to be able to sustain that, however, is another question. How many years in a row is he going to be able to go back to them and keep dunning them and getting them to give something? That's a real problem. We don't know yet because it hasn't been going on long enough.

But I think, generally speaking, that theatre is kind of the last one on the totem pole.

MS. ALEXANDER: Well, because you don't get any publicity per se, not nationally.

MR. GISTER: No. It's more controversial. I think that's part of it. You give to symphony, you give to ballet and it's not as -- simply not as controversial because, one, it doesn't deal with issues that are very immediate and they're personified. The ballet is sound. It's music. I mean the ballet is visual, the symphony is aural. Whereas in the theatre you're up there in your person and that can become so immediate and so controversial to a person that they don't want anything to do with it.

MR. OSTROW: Or just taking the other side for the sake of argument, so boring.

MR. GISTER: Or so boring.

MR. OSTROW: I've asked myself that question so many times and I'd plop for that. I think that business is just turned off because they don't think it's very good. I think they're kind of bored by it. That's the problem. If we were more artistically inclined, we would attract more and more investment.

MS. ALEXANDER: Oh, goodness, Stuart, I just can't agree with you. I mean for fifty good things that we are going to come up with there are going to be fifty bad. And I think that is true of any art right down.

MR. OSTROW: You mean fifty-fifty?

MS. ALEXANDER: I do.

MR. OSTROW: Oh, I disagree.

MS. ALEXANDER: For every play that I see that I like I see one that I don't like or vice-versa.

Right now dance is in. But dance wasn't the in thing to go to ten years ago. And there was a lot of boring ballet that I saw.

MR. GISTER: Still is.

MS. ALEXANDER: And there still is, sure. These things fluctuate in and out and I don't think that we can make value judgments about art nor should we get into that.

MR. OSTROW: Well, I just disagree with you. That is all. A lot has to do with the kind of leadership. I use Roger again. Roger has the Kennedy Center to advertise himself. He was able through imagination and perseverance and drive to put together all of these corporate people to take and accept what he is going to put out. That's a tribute to his ability. Maybe there aren't enough Roger Stevens around.

MS. ALEXANDER: There never are enough Roger Stevens.

MR. GISTER: It was my understanding that corporations could give up to five percent of greater income. Well, how much are they

actually giving? Are they giving the full five percent?

MR. OSTROW: I'll bet you that those corporations, those same corporations, would give to funding this institute I'm talking about. And I would be one of the salesmen for it because that's an aspiration within our reach and at the same time has nothing to do with making money.

Maybe they're put off by the fact that they have to go and be part of a profitmaking venture. Maybe that is a part of their problem, I don't know, at least with regard to the commercial theatre.

MR. GISTER: In regard to corporate donations, I've seen it happen where someone says I'm not going to support them any more, they did that lousy thing. And by lousy they don't mean bad. They mean a play that they disagreed with. Simply didn't like the subject matter of it. I've heard that.

But there are other things too. It may also be that in the not-for-profit theatre the corporations take a look at the way they handle themselves economically, financially and they say, hey, wait a minute. They don't do a very good job of that.

Maybe they don't understand the nature of this particular business because when they put their cost accountant to work --

MR. OSTROW: They see it's all nonsense.

MR. GISTER: That's right. It just doesn't come out reasonable.

MR. OSTROW: And they are looking for something in an unreasonable situation.

MR. GISTER: Yes. Then, that's a problem.

MS. ALEXANDER: No. if they're apprised of the economics of the business, surely they can understand. Am I misunderstanding?

MR. GISTER: No. There again I've had personal experience where it has been very difficult to show why certain things were the way they were, and even if you sold out, you simply were not going to be able to meet your costs.

MS. ALEXANDER: Oh, I understand what you are saying, yes.

MR. GISTER: And that's difficult for someone in another kind of business that operates in a totally different way.

MS. ALEXANDER: But that's just a question of education surely. I mean, if more of these corporate people talk with other corporate people who were involved with giving to theatres, they'd find that the problems are similar all across the country, right? Don't you think?

MR. GISTER: Right. But we don't have out our disposal the kind of economic statistics and hard information that other businesses have. You see, it's very difficult to talk to a businessman who is used to dealing with really factual stuff.

MS. ALEXANDER: Right. No, I understand.

MR. GISTER: And you start talking about "maybe's" with that person. For instance, he might say to you, well, look if this is your gap, why don't you just charge more money.

MS. ALEXANDER: Yes. I do believe it's a matter of education.

MR. GISTER: Yes. That's true. I'm not convinced at this momen t that even when they do understand it, some of them, that they will still necessarily give the money.

MS. ALEXANDER: Well, what I'm trying to say is, if corporations were given sufficient incentive to put their money into the theatre; -- I think theatre is low man on the totem pole right now because it's not an art form that everybody jumps up and down about. But I do feel it's time will come again. It's not going to fade away. Because you never lose; the one to one relationship is unique between actor and audience.

So, given that, it's just to my mind a matter of time before theatre becomes the "in" thing again. Opera has gone through a big thing. Dance has. Theatre will come back.

I also believe that you will always find a corporation that will match a particular project. "Oh Calcutta" might find the Playboy Corporation. Good Housekeeping wouldn't back it. But then Playboy wouldn't back "The Same Time Next Year." You know what I mean. So, I do feel you can find the right corporation for the right thing. You may have a harder time doing it. I'm talking about sufficient incentive for all of these people to want to put their money into it.

MODERATOR: If you are talking about the not-for-profit area, which is a season presumably, are you asking the corporation to buy into that season?

MS. ALEXANDER: Sure.

MR. GISTER: Underwrite that year.

MS. ALEXANDER: Right.

MODERATOR: Is there a problem if "Oh Calcutta" is in the season?

MS. ALEXANDER: Oh well, goodness, if we take money from anybody you are going to get into that problem. So the board of trustees rises up and -- it's a democracy. You have to fight for that all the time and you have to fight for it as head of the theatres.

So they don't back it. You find somebody else.

MR. GISTER: Maybe there needs to be greater tax incentives.

MR. OSTROW: Does anybody have a thesis as to why that is happening? Maybe they'd rather pay taxes on it and keep the profit and pay dividends to their stockholders.

MODERATOR: Do you think there are many people in the country who believe that theatre per se is and should be profitmaking?

MR. OSTROW: I think that is a very important point. I think that certainly with regard to the most popular art form we have in the united states which, by the way, is the American musical theatre, everyone is convinced that there is no reason to have any support to refill the treasury that has long been empty because we are flush, and shows like "Chorus Line" "Pippin" keep on making all of this money. Why in the world would we need to subsidize it.

I can imagine that, if all that they have seen are successful plays all throughout the country, they feel the same way about all kinds of theatre because the only thing that reaches them are the successful plays. So, if more theatres would follow what St. Louis does where there are unknown plays, and if they struggled with it and developed programs that are more in keeping with experimental theatre, that might have a bearing because then no one would come to them and the corporation would feel sorry for us and give us the money. You see, it's an endless spiral.

MODERATOR: Is there a role for the public funding sector?

MS. ALEXANDER: God knows, there should be. There should be. But how -- I mean, when I want to see better schools, how can I ask for the money to go into the arts? That's the way I feel about it. I think the priorities are probably elsewhere in my mind.

MR. OSTROW: Well, the fact of the matter is that that decision is not in your hands. It's completely out of your hands.

MS. ALEXANDER: Thank God.

MR. OSTROW: So now that it's available, what's your answer then?

MS. ALEXANDER: If available, of course they should participate.

MS. OSTROW: -- But it is now funded up to what? What is the National Endowment?

MR. GISTER: A hundred and ten million.

MR. OSTROW: Well, it's not likely to go down to five million tomorrow, is it?

MR. GISTER: I think it's more likely that you will find major decreases occurring in state budgets than in the national.

MS. ALEXANDER: Well, that's what I was thinking.

MR. GISTER: You would have it there before it would happen on the national level. But what is a worrisome thing to me is the infinitesimal amount of money going into theatres from local governments.

MS. ALEXANDER: Yes.

MR. GISTER: They are not making even simple efforts like relieving them of certain kinds of taxation. That to my mind is boggling. How do you tax something right up front you know is not for profit and is an organization that's getting major sources of its funding from state government, federal government, and then you lop a tax on it. I don't understand that.

MR. OSTROW: It reminds me of a great anecdonte about Gertrude Stein when she was dying. She gathered all her friends around in Paris. She said: Well, children, she said, what's the answer? Nobody said a word. Picasso looked at Hemingway, all of these great minds. And she looked around and said: All right, then, what is the question?

Now, that's what I'm reminded of, what is the question? I couldn't give you an answer to that question. How should you spend the public money?

MS. ALEXANDER: I was thinking more on a local level anyway when I talked about priorities as well. I think that that's where it has got to start too on a more grassroots thing in the community.

MR. GISTER: I think you have to at least give the people the opportunity to say yes or no. The tax checkoff thing -- is it going to be a national? -- some states may eventually pick it up, where you might be able to check off a dollar or whatever of your income tax to go to -- well, why can't we check it off on our state returns our our municipal returns? That seems to me to be a reasonable way. You are then putting it into the hands of the taxpayer.

MS. ALEXANDER: I think that is a very good suggestion. I would like this dollar to go to the arts, in my state, in my county or whatever.

MR. GISTER: That's another point.

MR. OSTROW: Well, there is a plan about that, isn't there?

MR. GISTER: A piece of legislation.

MS. ALEXANDER: Yes.

MR. OSTROW: What is it called?

MS. ALEXANDER: The federal funding.

MR. OSTROW: The Richmond bill.

MS. ALEXANDER: But we are talking about on a local level as well.

MR. GISTER: And the state level.

MODERATOR: Is there anything that the Congress can do to implement what you want to see done on a local level?

MR. GISTER: Sure. I can see them blackmailing them. I mean if Congress through NEA is going to give a certain amount of money in a very political way and it's becoming more and more egalitarian and democratic, then it seems to me that ought to have some influence on those states and municipalities that are receiving those funds.

If every Congressman in the United States wants to see to it that a fair share is coming back to his home, then it behooves that home, that place, to have something laid up on them, saying, look, this is what's coming to you now maybe you ought to be coming up with a matching share or whatever, a matching amount. I think there might be, you know, a hundred different ways.

MS. ALEXANDER: That's right.

MR. GISTER: When you give a group of legislators an opportunity to find a way to match something without having to come up with new dollars, they'll find a way. They got access to that that I --

MS. ALEXANDER: All they have to do is talk about it, each representative in his little newsletter to his district. All they have to do is mention it.

MODERATOR: Should the for-profit theatre be relieved of certain taxes for the sake of theatre?

MR. GISTER: Like property taxes.

You're in a deprived area, whether you know it or not, right around here. It's urban blight. It certainly is nothing like the Bronx, but it's blight.

And it seems to me it would be reasonable for there to be some relief.

MR. OSTROW: I feel inadequate in this area. I wish my answers were as good as the questions. I can't respond.

MR. GISTER: To my knowledge, I may be wrong because this is not an area of expertise of mine at all, but when a theatre sits dark

their property taxes don't go down.

MS. ALEXANDER: No, that's true.

MR. GISTER: They could sit dark for six months out of the year but their property taxes are the same for that period of time whether they are running a hit show or they've got three or four flops on their hands. I don't know if that is neither here nor there, because a business is a business. My opinion is, yes, it ought to be taken into account.

I feel that I have overlooked an area that I shouldn't have overlooked, and it's my area of principle concern and that deals with education.

I think we have focused a great deal on the mature artist and I think that is rightfully so because the art form indeed is in their hands, their making of it.

But I feel that there is -- we ought to be spending a few minutes asking ourselves whether or not indeed enough is being done to see to it that trained talented young people are having availability into the marketplace, whether there are indeed enough opportunities for them to just get the first job so they can eventually hopefully sustain this thing, this art form called the theatre.

If they're not working, they're not going to make much of a contribution ten or fifteen years later. If they have sat around and done nothing but turned in their resumes all over the place, they are not going to get the opportunity to get training, I mean training where it really counts, in the cauldron in the fire, on the stage in front of an audience.

That worries me. I don't think we have talked at all about that and it needs some comment.

I don't think there is enough perception yet in this country that indeed an artist does need an education, that they just don't go out and do it, and that that education should be very specific and should involve a certain number of things just as if you are going to train any of the professions. They require a certain kind of training in the discipline of that business.

And so far as we in the educational world are concerned, we do not have access to certain kinds of funding that practically every other educational area has access to because we fall neither here nor there. We don't fall within the province of the Office of Education nor do we fall under the National Endowment for the Arts. So we are just in limbo. We don't have access to the kinds of funding, let's say, the physics departments have access to or chemistry or English and so forth. And consequently, we are deprived. And I think it's affecting the health of the theatre itself.

MR. OSTROW: Absolutely. Well we always -- you know, actors and dogs, keep off the grass. It's always been that way with the theatre.

I don't see how it has significantly changed in the last fifty years. I just think that, if you continue to move people better than you moved them before, that's when you are going to make progress, if you can touch them. And the theatre can do that better than anything else in the entire world, and we're not doing it enough. So, you just keep on trying.

MS. ALEXANDER: I was very moved by what he just said. I think that's the way I feel today.

MR. OSTROW: I guess, really, I don't believe the government can solve the problem.

MS. ALEXANDER: Oh, no. I think that also, though I do feel that perhaps the country and more people can be better educated about the theatre and about the specific crisis that the theatre is going through.

MR. OSTROW: Yes. That's good. If there's a way to dramatize the crisis, yes, that's wonderful.

THEATRE RESEARCH PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

ROUND TABLE

October 20, 1977 -- 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

Biltmore Hotel

Los Angeles, California

PARTICIPANTS:

Alvin Epstein, Artistic Director, Guthrie Theatre
Robert Goldsby, Artistic Director, Berkeley Stage
Mako Iwamatsu, Director, East/West Theatre
Dan Sullivan, Critic
Marl Young, American Federation of Musicians

MODERATOR:

Robert W. Crawford

PRESENT:

Robert J. Anderson, Jr.
Sonia P. Maltezou

MODERATOR: Alvin, what would you say is the present role of for-profit and not-for-profit theatre in American society today?

MR. EPSTEIN: I am not sure I know, that anyone can know. I think there are so many different situations throughout the country and that very often it is a question of community that is supporting any particular activity, and the individuals who are responsible for that activity, and the character of it therefore is different. The New York theatre is obviously serving a different purpose from the Yale Repertory Theater, in which I just spent 10 years; and the purpose served by the Guthrie Theatre where I am about to begin my work is again going to be -- I'm sure that it is different, the function of the theater within these communities is different.

Superficially, I would say that in New York the commercial theater, the Broadway commercial theater, is for out-of-town tourists, and is a profit-making venture where you try to attract as many people to something which they feel is unique to New York, and keep alive the myth if it isn't in New York and if it isn't happening on Broadway, it's not the real thing and it's not the best. That creates a certain kind of activity and certain mentality about it, and it perpetuates itself.

The Yale Repertory Theater has a totally different function. Even in New Haven there are the remains of a commercial theater -- there is the Shubert Theater which used to be on the great touring circuit of pre and post Broadway runs, which again attempted to bring New York into smaller communities. That has more or less phased out of existence. It hardly exists anymore, at least in New Haven, and that role has been shared out in different ways now by the two theaters. The main one in New Haven is The Long Wharf Theater and the other one is the Yale Repertory Theater. I think the Yale Rep has assumed for itself the role of experimentation and the developing of works that are assumed to be important, although they are not going to be appealing to the Broadway audience. They are not going to have a commercial appeal base. They are very often going to have to challenge the public, and therefore alienate the public to a certain degree. I will not presume to speak for The Long Wharf. I think that they have, by the nature of things, because your repertory theater exists and does what it does, they tend to fit into the community in a different way, satisfying the other needs of more accessible theater, perhaps responding more to what one assumes the audience wants. Therefore they will do, they have done, plays like WILDERNESS, more of the Lillian Hellman plays, plays already having a reputation that have been around for 20, 30, 40 years, that are proved, tried and which people want to see. The Yale Repertory Theater doesn't do that as much. They have devoted their efforts to new playwrights, and even when dealing with the classics, they have done it in new ways that are less restrained and appealing to the public, either sophisticated or unsophisticated.

The Minneapolis situation, now, I am sure is different. I don't really know enough about it yet, because I am really too new there, but the Guthrie Theatre seems to be combining both those functions and serving an enormous public drawn from a five-state area. And, if you will, just extrapolate that endlessly into the country, and on and on and on, you will find many different functions. There are theater groups that really are meant to be for small cults of supporters, and should be. Out of that work

conceivably can come, and I am sure has already come, and will continue to come, work that will be of interest and importance to the general public. But it certainly doesn't at its inception, it is not at all involved for the general public.

There is a whole range, an enormous gamut. I don't think that we can say that the theatre has one relationship, one position in the country at the moment.

MR. GOLDSBY: I think it might be useful for us to look at the role of the theatre in the United States from a European point of view, and it is reflected in my perception of the needs that we have in the Bay area. In Paris, let's say, you have the major institutional theatre like the Comedie Francaise, which does something like 40 or 50 productions a year of major classics in the country for dramatic repertory. It sits in the middle of Paris, occupies the energies of the major artists of the country, a major force in the city in that it is always sold out. It does classics, modern classics, and has marvellous actors, and to appreciate it one has to go see 40 plays a year to understand what they are doing, not to see one production and call it a museum.

What happens with the Comedie Francaise, it feeds back into the professional life of the city. By that I mean it is a place against which other artists struggle. They say, "I don't like the Comedie Francaise, I'm going to do my own thing," and then they start their own theatre, the Jacques Copeau, the Jean Louis Barrault, or whatever, and they move against the status quo, which is always there, always successful, and always very well done. And it is very well active.

So you have in Europe three theatres, you don't only have the commercial theatre, which they have, they have their Boulevard theatre, or Western theatre, or whatever, They also have major institutions in buildings and large staffs that do substantial professional work in classics. The Boulevard and the major institutions, Comedie Francaise and The National and Marigny, provide a very visible, successful operation against which the smaller theatres can operate.

Now, the smaller theatres have a bewildering variety of stuff, too, like Alvin was saying, from clique or particular kinds of comic strip theatre or surrealist theatre or futuristic, or whatever, but it is a small public that says, "All the rest of society is crap, we have the truth." To artists like Jean Vilar, who is bridging these fields and doing both classics as well as new plays, as well as new ways of doing classics, and so forth.

In America we haven't had that first institution, but let's say in the Bay Area that is exactly what has happened with ACT. ACT came into the Bay Area 10 years ago or more, became an institutional theatre of skill and professional chutspah, and what has happened in the last 10 years is the growth of all kinds of other theatres. There are about 80 small theatres in the Bay Area now that were not there 10 years ago. Ten years ago when ACT started there were, I don't know, maybe a couple of theatres with players; I don't know, maybe a few fringe groups. Now there's a lot more. I think part of it is because of ACT's success with the middle class

audience. In other words, the middle class now have a major place to go, they sell out all the time, you know, they are a success.

So people get into the habit of going to the theatre. Once they get into the habit of going to the theatre, they tend to want to go to other theatres, and other theatres are beginning to do better and better each year, I suspect partly because people have seen ACT and they want to try something else, they have seen the Berkley Rep, another successful -- another theatre that does classic and popular plays. They do Shaw and Beckett and Brecht and Burke, like you find them in New York, you know, certain key writers that get you a big public.

Well, the other part of the professional theatre that I am interested in, that is a theatre that is devoted to developing or making -- let's say it is the equivalent to a laboratory science. It is pure research -- it's a pure research place. It is a seminal place, which is trying to put on with care and as much professional class as possible writers who care about the theatre rather than writers who want to make it in the industry -- people who want to write for the live actor in space with live people watching. That kind of writer is the one that we are interested in serving -- and not only us but lots of other places that have been developing. So in America we don't have the institutional theatre that is beginning to develop like the ACT, Guthrie, and other cities outside of New York, maybe not enough and not in New York, not in Washington, which is a little ironic, since the major cities, like playing in Paris, France and going down to Marseilles, is unthinkable, although Marseilles is a nice place, but Paris is better.

It is better because it has more to do and more things going on. So I think American professional theatre now has three or four major kinds of identities. One is the development of large institutions that are hopefully getting involved in training. The Comedie Francaise has always had a theatre group attached to it for a couple hundred years. The Old Vic used to be a theatre school, the national theatre school. ACT does that.

The second level of interest, the Boulevard theatre, which is basically providing entertainment, recreation, which I have no contempt for. For recreation, go to the theatre, have a good time, that's great. We try to give the people a good time, too, but we are not always so successful because the work that we do our critics usually call a fraud. We have seen the plays that are developing that very often got in trouble for something. They are not the perfect play. So you have developed other small theatres that are equivalent to pure science research; that is, they are working in an area to try to find a new truth, and they don't know exactly what it is yet. They are trying to find new writers. They don't know exactly who they are.

So that's where we are in the Bay Area. We have some institutional theatre now. We don't have much of a Boulevard theatre, commercial theatre. ACT is sort of both in the Bay Area. Then we have a theatre like ours putting on new plays, primarily, and primarily American plays.

I keep struggling to make myself and other people not take a play from England, because they were done in the West End, and they say, "All right, we'll do an American play." It may not be as good, but at least it is a struggle with our own society and our own troubles, and that is what we ought to do is American work. It is hard to get. It is hard to find them, hard to find the right plays, so we do plays not so good. We get panned, but it is developing.

MR. YOUNG: Again, the role of the theatre is three or four roles. First, there is commercial theatre; they are there to make money. Broadway theatres. They are also to entertain. They feel if they don't entertain, they probably aren't going to make money, so they entertain, and through entertainment they draw people. They make money, that is one aspect.

Then I can speak of Los Angeles now, where New York used to be the center, Los Angeles is now fast growing and coming and now is known as a theatrical center. In our negotiations with the Civic Light Opera, we found out how they used to get many of their productions from New York. Most of those productions that they are going to have now are going to be produced right here in Los Angeles, So that means that the local singers and actors and musicians and other people involved in the theatre are going to be getting work possibly that was in New York. That is an economic aspect of it, but what I mean is that New York, wherever they had to come from New York, now we feel here in Los Angeles can build our own and most of the things that can be produced will be produced right here in Los Angeles.

Of course, now in the Music Center complex there is a theatre called the Mark Taper Forum. This is an experimental theatre where they do the offbeat things, they do the new things by new writers. They will take a different path from the old tried and true, say, MY FAIR LADY or FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, and things like that that they know will make money. They will try a new play or new musical, because they are looking for new things and they have been sometimes commercially successful. They have had a couple of things just sold out months in advance, you can't get into them. But still they are fortunate in doing the experimental, and yet it has become commercially successful, that is a very unusual thing.

And of course in this area, and I am sure it is true in every big city, there is a great proliferation of the small theatres just everywhere, just dotted all over Los Angeles. There is the small theatre that is thrown up by people who are in this business, who have maybe not been able to get to do the type of things they want. They start their own theatre. They put on plays, mostly by new authors, or they will take an old play and do it in a different way, and they will usually run weekends. They do not have the appeal to run every night, but they will run weekends, and they will run maybe one play for six months, seven months or a year. I know people with whom I have worked in the past who have done this and they have been very successful at it.

So this is very good for Los Angeles, because that means in just about every community you go into you have some theatre for the people to attend, and they have their choice. They can go to the productions at the Music Center, Civic Light Opera, or Huntington Hartford, where they do plays, usually plays that are tried and true, but then they can go to the outlying areas where they get other plays also now. There are actors' workshops, again, where actors go in and they can ply their trade.

There is not enough work for every actor to work in the entertainment unions. I dare say that a fourth or a fifth, no more than a fourth or a fifth of the people, are making a complete living in their trade. I know in the musician's union, we have 16,000 members, but I doubt whether more than 2,000 of our members are making a complete living from music and don't have to do anything else. So you will have the actors' workshops where they get to go in and ply their trade anyway, and it is sort of a labor of love, but again this is good.

Also you will find in Los Angeles and other cities where maybe through the help of the city or other governmental agencies and the professional theatre, they will take the theatre to the people. We have what is called SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARKS. Our musicians' union -- this isn't theatre, of course, but we will take music to the parks. But they do have a setup where they take Shakespeare into the parks, and that means that the common man can now go out and see Shakespeare, where if he wanted to see Shakespeare at the Huntington Hartford or some other theatre, he might not have the price of admission or he just ins't used to going into such sumptuous seating, or maybe he feels he isn't so sophisticated. When they bring it to him, you find that there is an audience out there that you haven't been able to tap before.

Now, you have opened up a big vista for people that have not been tapped before, and maybe now when they bring these plays to the theatres, these people who have been introduced to them, as a result of bringing them to the people, are now going to the theatre. So I think there are so many facets of this thing and all of these things are roles that are played by the professional theatre. I think if the situation continues in Los Angeles, and I'm sure as I say it applies to other big cities, I think the role of the theatre is going to improve greatly, and I like the role the theatre is playing, because it is such a many faceted thing now.

MR. SULLIVAN: I can't talk that generally, and I realize I want to write all of this down and revise it, not just say it. But I have some specific things to say to Alvin. I started in Minneapolis writing about theatre, and it's so true, and to you too, the large institution breeds the counter-institution, the anti one.

The Guthrie comes along in '63, and by '64 you have the Firehouse Theatre saying, "That is shit going on down there, we are going to really break this town open." But it wouldn't have happened if it had not been for the arrogancy provided by the classic downtown theatre.

And the Minneapolis Children s Theater, which is superb, I think, and I think that a lot of the conscience about design that you see in that theatre is an offshoot of what they saw, people saw at the Guthrie. So it is true that the conservative theatre then oddly enough breeds the radical theatre, the antithesis.

And to you, the proliferation of theatre in Los Angeles reminds me of an infectious disease, because it is not all that healthy.

MR. YOUNG: It has its good and bad points.

MR. SULLIVAN: A lot of this is people who couldn't make it in what we call the industry, and really can't make it in the theatre, and I am sad just to see all the time wasted and all these people going out, essentially doing showcases, that 50 people honestly will come to see over a six-week run, sometimes. It is a real waste of lives going on there, and you want to say, "Go back where you came from," as in that old song, and of course they won't and shouldn't. I suppose out of that comes talent and genius, and I know some actors have made it in the industry because they worked, because they were first seen there, showcases and things like that, that I guess in the long run it is a good thing they are there, but proliferation is not necessarily in all cases healthy.

I suppose the role of the professional theatre is to provide a model to remind people what theatre is at its best, how it differs from the other ways of conveying drama -- television and film -- to give you that special thing that you don't necessarily get from live performance as such, but from good live performance is the thing that comes off. I always thought, too, not just to turn on the general public to the theatre, but especially to turn on the young person who is interested in writing, and I think of Minneapolis, Let's say Scott Fitzgerald grew up in St. Paul in 1913 or '14, and the theatre he would have seen there at that time would have been some kind of hack stock company downtown and some touring Broadway shows, and he was interested in the theatre. But what if the Guthrie Theatre had existed over the river at that time for him to go over and see really first-class Shakespeare or whoever, to acquaint him with what can be done with a stage and has been done? I think we might have gotten a great dramatist out of Scott Fitzgerald, as well as a great novelist, not just somebody that wrote something called THE VEGETABLE, you know, but I have read it.

MR. GOLDSBY: We did it.

MR. EPSTEIN: You didn't believe it was terrible until you saw it.

MR. SULLIVAN: So what is really wonderful which you see is this web growing around the country where you feel a young person can go and get a very good idea of what the dramatic tradition is and what theatre is. And I would hope in the next generation we will see in terms of American playwrights results, I mean, regional playwrights. What is disturbing to me so far is enough good regional plays haven't come from the regional theatres. I mean you got the Preston Jones plays, which I think are pretty good little Texas plays, and they've come from there. But it's hard to say, I mean, I can't think of a new play from the Middle West that comes from

the Guthrie first. ACT really hasn't, I don't believe, given us any plays, yet I believe they tried. The Taper has brought us some, but they have never been, I think specifically West Coast plays that have been given. Maybe it just takes time for all of that to happen, but I think that is a slight problem right now.

Somebody talked about New York. I am really bothered when a West Coast author will do a light comedy, I'm not saying light comedy, but kind of fun, set in a New York apartment, just because that is where they are always set. You know, the play doesn't have anything to do with it. It could have been at the Mara, and in fact it was in this man's mind, but he says, "Better do it in New York." That kind of thinking is crazy, and you hope that the strength of the regional theatre is the feeling now that theatre is real wherever it's good. We never talk about a national orchestra, although there is one called that, but it is hardly the national orchestra. Music is an experience for everybody. It is a force in so many things. It is ludicrous to think of all these theatres we have as associated with a theatre in just this one spot. Does baseball only happen in Yankee Stadium?

MR. EPSTEIN: It hasn't been that way for quite a while.

MR. SULLIVAN: We know that the Guthrie Theatre is one of the best. There is no need to do best, but there is at least a level of excellence that can be found anywhere, and that's the exciting thing for me about the situation over the past 10 years, that more and more people have come to see that.

MR. EPSTEIN: I think you made a point, and then you made another point, and I think they are closely related. You were saying that the institution of theatres in the United States are beginning to appear in the forward role of Comedie Francaise. Obviously I think you and I would agree that role is not being filled by the institutional theatre yet, and that is one of the aims and one of the biggest things to be achieved, and one of the reasons why we would like to have this report have an effect, because it will enable the institutional theatre to finally perfect its craft and its artistry to the point where it really becomes a notable representative of the art that it is practicing.

At the moment the role is the struggle for survival, even though it may be survival on a very high level, which makes it look like, well, there is no problem, still takes away so much energy and confuses the role of the theatre. Does it primarily have to sell tickets? The Comedie Francaise doesn't have to worry about selling tickets, because they already have created a whole situation within and without the theatre where the tickets get sold without any worrying about it. This is not only true of the Comedie Francaise, I was just in Russia in May, you can't get a ticket to anything, because the theatres are all marvellous.

Now, when that happens, when we do have some institutional theatres that do fulfill that role, I don't think we will have wasted lives of the people who go into all these sorts of cancerous little growths and workshops, because they cannot make it in an industry or even in the arts. That is because there aren't any standards, there are no real standards. The

standards also have to be created by the true success of the institutional theatres, and the whole network of other laboratory and commercial theatres around them. Then people would know that they simply are not fit for the art and it would be easy for everybody else to recognize they are not fit for it, and it wouldn't happen.

MR. EPSTEIN: What is good acting?

MR. SULLIVAN: Exactly. We know what a good pianist is. We all sit down and, you know, there is a technique to be mastered.

MR. YOUNG: Yes, there is a technique to be mastered, all those things, but still you might have two critics going to the same play and some concert and come out with completely divergent views as to the worth of the artist or worth of the play. For instance, I grew up in Chicago. Horowitz appeared there once. I think he is the greatest pianist that ever lived. He got a bad review from Claudia Cassidy. She said that Horowitz played like a tired man. How would she know what a tired man plays like? So it is all judgmental. I don't think we are ever going to reach the state that you are alluding to, because it is just never going to happen, because what is good and what is bad depends upon the background of the person seeing it and what his attitude is towards what he is seeing.

MR. EPSTEIN: No, no, I do not agree, vehemently don't agree. Of course, what you are saying is true.

MR. YOUNG: But he doesn't agree.

MR. EPSTEIN: I don't agree, I don't agree in the absolute.

MR. YOUNG: There is no absolute.

MR. EPSTEIN: The absolute is that Vladimir Horowitz knows how to play the piano, whether Claudia Cassidy thinks he does or not.

MR. YOUNG: Oh, yes, of course.

MR. EPSTEIN: She may be right, that he may be tired. Maybe he can have an off performance and Claudia Cassidy's expectations will be disappointed because from Horowitz she doesn't expect something like that.

MR. YOUNG: What are her expectations? I don't think she is a musician. How is she going to make her judgment?

MR. SULLIVAN: There is a basic technique that anybody recognizes in piano playing. Everybody knows you have to have fingers, you have to hit the notes right, and when you hit the note wrong, it is irritable.

MR. YOUNG: Then there is Rubinstein who hits wrong notes, and still is one of the great pianists, oh, come on.

MR. SULLIVAN: He hits more right ones than wrong ones.

MR. YOUNG: Everybody on the stage does that.

MR. EPSTEIN: Not among actors.

MR. YOUNG: Every accepted concert pianist doesn't or he is not going to be there.

MR. SULLIVAN: I was a music critic once in my early, early life, and we had a wonderful phrase that Harold Schoenberg used to say, "If it is really terrible, do this in review, 'Mr. Sullivan's performance did not meet professional standards.'" And everybody knew what that means. Now, tell me have you ever gone to write about an actor, can you say his performance doesn't meet professional standards? It is almost impossible. Someone will say, "Hell, it moved me." He forgot all the words, his pants fell down, he hit scenery, but he moved me. There's really no answer to that. I know exactly what you are saying.

MR. YOUNG: Well, I say there is no answer.

MR. EPSTEIN: You said, "otherwise he wouldn't be there."

MR. YOUNG: I said if he hit more wrong notes than right ones, as far as a pianist is concerned, he would not be hired by the symphony orchestras, you know.

MR. EPSTEIN: But in the theatre, the theatre is full of people who would not be there if there were true standards.

MR. SULLIVAN: The reason being, I think that the television and movies make it easy for a person to somehow become a star. If he just will be himself, that will be captured, and he will be a star.

MR. YOUNG: As long as you have public appeal.

MODERATOR: How is a measure of true standards established?

MR. SULLIVAN: People can eventually tie in, people understand what championship performance is like. They go to a World Series because they feel they are going to see good baseball playing there. They will also go to a theatre once they understand what championship acting is like. The problem is it takes a while to develop championship actors. The problem is getting the money to keep a company going to do that. You need your own minor leagues. You have got to develop them, you have got to give them classes, and all of that, and that does not come all at once.

MR. GOLDSBY: That is for the institutional theatres to develop these actors, that everybody goes to see and they know if they go to see it they will see what a competence of professional level is. It is much harder in theatre than it is in music to establish these, because they start at the conservatory agency on the same idea that one should know certain fundamentals, be able to speak well, move well, and so forth, but it is very

tricky in acting, because somebody can come along that doesn't go through your program and act you right off the stage. Some body can come along who knows how to do everything, and is dull, beyond belief, and is mechanical, and is doing all the right things. A lot of old English actors were very well trained. They were very dull, they had no emotional reality, and then America came along and everybody started being emotional. Then they threw out voice and diction and they became very real. Then someone, then it swung all the way around to the other side. It's very hard to do, but it's not something we should say can't be done. I agree that we must do it.

MR. EPSTEIN: We are the models, we know where it exists. You mentioned the first one.

MR. GOLDSBY: I think basically the kind of attention to training is much important to professional theatres now than it was 10 or 15 years ago, and I think in another 10 or 15 years you will have many more well trained actors in the theatre and that know the difference between when they work in a film, they can't act, they just have to be, and when they work in Shakespeare, they have to superact and not just be.

MR. SULLIVAN: We are seeing that.

MR. GOLDSBY: And they have got to know the difference.

MR. SULLIVAN: We have people going from film to stage and back to film and back to stage who are willing to do that and Dustin Hoffman. I hope we will get back to the stage some day. These people, you know, in the old days you did your five years on Broadway in the 20's, and then you got to be a movie star and never went back. For one thing, you were too busy in pictures.

MR. EPSTEIN: I believe that it is still essentially true.

MR. SULLIVAN: It is not true.

MR. YOUNG: There are those though who do go back because they want to go back and develop in their craft.

MR. EPSTEIN: Those four or five stars do not a profession make.

MR. GOLDSBY: You are right.

MR. SULLIVAN: No, nobody says it does. It is a beginning. It's a return to sanity, that's all.

MR. EPSTEIN: Yes.

MR. GOLDSBY: He was doing very little when he went back, he couldn't be heard. People who went to see him said he had lost what ever you need to fill a theatre.

MR. SULLIVAN: Would Brando have been any good if he had gone back.

MR. EPSTEIN: There is absolutely no doubt that he would have been. We saw him many times on the stage and he was brilliant before he went to Hollywood. But what a loss to the theatre and to the whole development of our theatre that that man was lost.

MR. SULLIVAN: I believe the found Brando today would go back.

MR. CRAWFORD: So far, I have been hearing three "shoulds." One, there should be a standard setting in the institutional theater. I am oversimplifying the statement, right?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes.

MR. CRAWFORD: Two, there should be more training of actors to get towards that standard. Am I correct so far?

MR. EPSTEIN: Yes.

MR. CRAWFORD: Three, there should be some way to have more freedom of movement back and forth of those who are experienced and trained actors from the nonstage to the stage.

MR. GOLDSBY: One of the problems that we run into, and shouldn't, is the actors' ability to move from highly paid, visible theaters to nonpaid, nonvisible theatres, and their reluctance to do so, and the union's problem with the waiver situation, and all of that business.

MR. SULLIVAN: I feel it is a question of integration.

MR. GOLDSBY: Some unions make it so much easier, in other words, stars in London get on the train and go up to Edinburgh and appear in a restoration play in Edinburgh, and they come back and take part in a movie, and they they go play a starring role in the West End, and they have that mobility.

MR. EPSTEIN: Yes. When you say star, that term has to be defined a little bit, because they have many stars, people we don't even know, but they aren't considered stars there, because they are seen in many, many different things.

MR. GOLDSBY: They work all the time, and work in different areas.

MR. EPSTEIN: You say Judy Dench to somebody out here, they don't know who Judy Dench is, but she is a star in England.

MR. GOLDSBY: Sure.

MR. YOUNG: But you must remember that the theatre in Europe looks much different than in America. It is a part of the social fabric over there. They grew up with the theatre. The government supported it, and everything, so that is part of their lives. Here it is a thing if you have the money, you go to see theatre, but that's why I say the fact that we have here in Los Angeles started bringing theatre to people, you are now not only developing actors, you are developing an audience, and that is important. But we have to -- I would like to see some day the United States adopt the same sttitude towards the theatre and towards all our history that Europe has, because when the child grows up, it is part of its social background.

MR. GOLDSBY: That is what this is about. This is hopefully moving the Congress to change its attitude about show business.

MR. EPSTEIN: Shouldn't we talk a little bit about what the role is before we move on to what it should be? What is the role that we have described? We have described all sorts of activities without saying what it is that is going on. What makes all of this activity happen? Why are we sitting here talking? Why are all these people doing all these things?

MR. SULLIVAN: Is the question what does theatre do for people?

MR. EPSTEIN; And why is it important that all of this stuff should happen? Why should this be going on?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, a specific example is I was feeling very blue and low and terrible, down on myself and the human race in general. I had to go up to Santa Barbara, and it turned out to be the Royal Shakespeare Company, four of them, doing Anthology to Shakespeare, and I went out so illumined and so enlightened and so glad to be part of this race, because this man had written these words, and these men and women up there had read so beautifully, not just beautifully in that sense, but given them so much life. I was glad I had the gift of language. I wanted to go back and write something, and luckily I couldn't. And that is what theatre is about.

Those were real people who had showed me what this other real man way back then had done with his real pen. I think that is why theatre is good. That's what I want to see happen everywhere, in every city in this country.

MR. EPSTEIN: I think this country at the moment is striving desperately to civilize itself. I think that is what really is happening.

MR. YOUNG: It is taking the first step.

MR. EPSTEIN: Yes.

MR. YOUNG: Reluctantly, sometimes, but at least it has taken them now, and I think it's on its way.

MR. GOLDSBY: We mean by that, don't we, what Dan was saying, we mean by being civilized that the geniuses of the race who have created something that has so many complexities to it has come across the past and h s come alive again in life. We are in touch with our tradition, and we Americans have had a lot of trouble in America getting in touch with our tradition, and the reason is because we don't believe in memory, and we cut off yesterday very rapidly as a nation, and we don't tend to go back for weeks and months. I think that is right, we are trying to get in touch with our tradition.

MR. SULLIVAN: It is not just a matter of being in touch with our tradition, it is being in touch with the possibilities of the future.

MR. GOLDSBY: That is the other side of it.

MR. SULLIVAN: To be reminded of it, what other people have done, and where we could go with that, and it is kind of touching the realm if you believe the race is still evolving. It is touching that next step for a moment there, where we might be going.

MR. GOLDSBY: I think it has two sides, to come back to the institutions, one is the institutional theatre that is doing Chekhov and putting him in touch with GOING TO MOSCOW and MAGNIFICENT HUMAN BEING. Then turning to the other side of Russia to find out what the Communist life is like. That man, that presence, that phenomenal perception of life.

Now, we get in the other side of the coin is what about the American who puts us in touch with something equally significant now, and then the next 10 years? What about those people? That is where you run into trying to find a writer that is in touch with our own society which is much less popular than getting in touch with Henry V, you know, or Tanner and SUPERMAN. It is much harder to get in touch. We can't even get in touch with Vietnam, for instance; in fact, that's not popular. One guy writes about it, David Gray, who else? Who else? That is where the smaller seminal theatre which ought to be just as good as the big theatre. We ought to have actors that are just as good, and designers and directors that are just as competent and artistically talented as the people in big theatres, if they are going to do the artistic work of the writer who is creating something now, looking for

ways to deal with now in our society, our area, our region, if you want. And that seems to me where we should be going to give life to those, give continuing life to those institutions, both large and small, which are maybe doing both things that are necessary for the culture to grow and to come alive.

MR. SULLIVAN: Most definitely, you can't ignore either one.

MR. YOUNG: We have to develop an American tradition. I think the theatre is way ahead of us than music. At least there are American writers writing for the American stage, but if you go to a concert now, 99.9 percent of the music is written by European composers. We are not developing, I' don't think, any American tradition as to what we call serious symphonic music is concerned. Trying to get a symphony orchestra, a major symphony orchestra to play a work by an American composer is almost an impossibility. So I think that theatre is way ahead of us as far as the musical world, because we just do not have any major symphony orchestras who make it a point at every program to present a work by an American composer. Yet there are good American composers, but they are writing the music and it is sitting on the shelf, and music that is written and never heard might as well never have been written.

MR. GOLDSBY: There is an incredible irony. American theatre is, let's say, commercial New York theatre, which was all original new plays for a long time. I mean, when I grew up in New York I went to see new plays all the time on Broadway open on Broadway. I saw STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE open on Broadway. I saw GLASS MENAGERIE, all kinds of new plays that were opened on Broadway. 40 or 50 theatres did mostly new plays. No one ever did a revival, that didn't make money. Now the country went clear around and the major institutional theatre is doing nothing but revivals, because that's the only thing people go see. They can't get their people to go to new plays. When we did this new play at ACT, it was a disaster, nobody went. It's a strange thing.

Now the new play home is going back in the new theatre, being identified in some strange way as kind of, you know, creepy little thing where people that haven't made it in profession, and that's not true. A lot of the smaller theatres have people in them that have made it in the profession and chosen to do this kind of work.

MR. SULLIVAN: I just think that small theatre is vanity theatre.

MR. GOLDSBY: Oh, I know what you mean. I mean, I know it is all over, it is hard to tell the difference. Like the critics in the Bay Area have called me up and say, "What is this? We can't get around. We are being asked to go to 50 openings this week and most of them are people that have no background or anything." Well, I am not really arguing with that.

This is a weird irony in America, isn't it, the writer who was the center of commercial theatre for decades, anyway, disappeared and has been replaced by Shakespeare, bless his heart, and now the writer is trying to get back, and the only way he can get back is through the small unit, because economically the large theatre has been priced out of taking any risk. They can't take a risk.

MR. SULLIVAN: That is not true of all regional theatres. The Taper has taken some risks.

MR. GOLDSBY: Well, I am not familiar with this enough to really make a gnneralization. I am saying that most theatres that have, let's say, 1,500 seats or something to fill, I would say generally they do not choose to do a new play.

MR. YOUNG: They won't take the risk.

MR. GOLDSBY: How big is the Mark Taper?

MR. EPSTEIN: There are three new plays.

MR. GOLDSBY: In how many years?

MR. EPSTEIN: In 13 or 14 years.

MR. GOLDSBY: How many does the Taper theatre seat, do you know?

MR. SULLIVAN: 700.

MR. GOLDSBY: So that takes nerve to put a new play on in a theatre of 700 seats.

MR. YOUNG: But remember that this theatre was built especially for this type of thing, so that is what it is there for.

MR. GOLDSBY: And then you have the Ahmanson next-door.

MR. YOUNG: That is part of a complex.

MR. SULLIVAN: It is true that theatre is somewhat subsidized with the money that is supposed to come in from the Ahmanson but sometimes it has worked the other way around.

MR. GOLDSBY: Yes.

MR. SULLIVAN: You know, the Ahmanson tries big popular things and those haven't gone, and the Taper has found instant success.

MR. GOLDSBY: That seems really healthy. I love that. I think that sounds like a great idea, and then they also do the kind of work we do. They do this in their forum, I mean, their lab.

MR. SULLIVAN: Their lab theatre, yes.

MR. GOLDSBY: They take the weaker play and put it into a lab situation and try it out, to see if it works well, and they have a nice dynamic situation.

MR. SULLIVAN: I really disagree today that audiences, our regional audiences, are scared of new plays as they used to be, at least from our experience in this area. They will come out and the new plays need a little selling.

MR. GOLDSBY: I have heard that here, this town is based on new ideas. They are looking for new scripts for movies to make a million dollars. They must be interested in new things here.

MR. EPSTEIN: We want to put ourselves in touch with our own world.

MR. SULLIVAN: You can't say just that they are good, because a lot of them aren't good, but you have to say is this playwright going to be good if we do something with his last play.

MR. GOLDSBY: That is important, that is really important.

MR. YOUNG: And you can't say how good his work is on the stage until you see it.

MR. GOLDSBY: You have got to take a risk on the writer.

MR. SULLIVAN: The commercial will never take it on as a responsibility.

MR. GOLDSBY: I am doing a play now of Robert Onerato and everybody says it is not a good play. He to me has a passion about writing and an emotional commitment to the theatre, which I think is terrific, and I am not doing his play because I think it is going to be a commercial vehicle, because he is a writer that is going to be a commercial vehicle, you know. He is going to do things that are successful. This is a play that probably won't be on Broadway or anything, but the next one he writes or two or three later, if he can get through these kinds of things, figure out other things, that's important.

MR. EPSTEIN: He has already got a play on Broadway.

MR. GOLDSBY: Yes. I didn't know that when I first started, yes, but now he does have a good one.

MR. SULLIVAN: That came to him through the O'Neill, which is a marvellous place, and of which there should be many more subsidized by somebody.

MR. EPSTEIN: He came to us through the Yale drama school. Then he went to the O'Neill.

MR. SULLIVAN: Then he went to the O'Neill.

MR. EPSTEIN: I mean he was taught in a real theatre school.

MR. SULLIVAN: Was he one of the people that had a CBS scholarship there?

MR. EPSTEIN: No, he was a student.

MR. GOLDSBY: He also went to the California Institute of the Arts.

MR. YOUNG: Is part of our discussion here what is to be the role of the private sector and government sector?

MR. IWAMATSU: In the sense of our own community, theatre is twofold. One, that of training institutions, and the other of what they are talking about, development of new playwrights. We have been trying to do both, you know, in terms of our theatre, which is small, and which is the only one like it in this area.

So for that reason, the community looks to us to supply a certain amount of training grounds. But there is a dilemma there when you are going into two-fold areas, which we are faced with right now, a dilemma in the sense of, "Okay, just because everyone from A to Z equally pays dues to have training, does C and D get equal amount of parts, and so on and so forth, as A and Z?" There is that kind of a problem, which is not a problem that perhaps some of the other bigger non-profit theatres are faced with, you know, but nevertheless it is a real one with us. It is a real dilemma.

Now, going to this development of new work, which we have been doing, and what is encouraging to us is that, let us say, oftentimes audiences are influenced by reviewers. Now, when we do our new works, even in spite of, let's say, bad reviews, we seem to get audiences. People are more in need of getting in touch with playwrights. Whereas, if we do, let's say, THREE SISTERS, OUR TOWN, or whatever, sometimes we do get good reviews for what it is. Yet our community is not really interested in seeing our people doing OUR TOWN or THREE SISTERS. They would rather see something that is more pertinent or they think more pertinent to where we are today.

MR. SULLIVAN: It's the ideal audience he has got. The audience really likes to go to the theatre and thinks of the theatre as a way of helping itself find itself, which we are always saying theatre should do.

MR. IWAMATSU: When I say our people, okay, when we started 13 years ago the audience ratio was like 20 yellow to 80 percent non-yellow. Now we have gotten to a point of close to 50-50.

MR. SULLIVAN: I was going to say one of the best plays, new plays, I think of the year, was called ANDASOL SHALL DANCE. I think it was done and the East-West put it on in a tent and I think it had a healthy run and good reviews, and the American Theater Critics Association selected it for inclusion in that big, Best of Broadway Annual, which is now going to include a new play from the regional theatre, and a small theatre in Los Angeles will discover it and somebody will come and see it, and they did, so there is a lot of hope in that. It is a West Coast play. It is a regional play.

MR. GOLDSBY: Is it a mixed cast?

MR. IWAMATSU: No.

MR. GOLDSBY: It is all Oriental?

MR. IWAMATSU: Yes.

MR. EPSTEIN: I think every theatre has to really go for itself, and I don't want to talk for commercial theatre. I think the commercial theatre -- my instinct is to exclude it as much as possible from the public money, because I don't think any money that comes from the government to be put into the "shoulds", should then be taken out by somebody who is in it to make a profit. That's all. That's not what we are talking about. That is not one of the "shoulds." How should these theatres be able to turn a small investment into a big profit? I haven't heard anybody say that this morning yet.

MR. SULLIVAN: Don't you have some concern about the increasing dissolving of the line between profit theatre and non-profit, or maybe you don't? Maybe it's a healthy thing, but I am bothered sometimes by it.

MR. EPSTEIN: That may be a separate and a big question.

MR. SULLIVAN: All right.

MR. EPSTEIN: I don't know, I'd rather not attack it at the moment.

MR. SULLIVAN: All right.

MR. EPSTEIN: I think I am getting the sense now of what I feel I would do with the money, how I think I would use the money. I think that I am talking about the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis.

Yes. I have to be able to first of all hire more actors than I am able to hire now, and I have to be able to hire them at better salaries than I am able to pay them now, because the really talented ones who feel their strength and their value as a commodity are grabbed by the people who can afford to pay more money, and the theatre at the moment is in no position to compete with the television and movies.

Now, I am not suggesting that the theatre should be subsidized by the government to the point where they can pay equal salaries.

MR. GOLDSBY: A million dollars.

MR. EPSTEIN: That's right, a million dollar contract. That is nonsense. That is not what I am suggesting, but the actor has to be given the opportunity to earn over a year's employment a salary that he realizes will keep him decent, able to clothe, feed, house himself, get married, have children, maybe send them to college when they grow up. You cannot ask a 45 or 50-year-old actor, who has a family to work for $350 top. That is not our top now, but I know there are theatres that cannot afford to pay more than $300 or $350 a week, and our top is not much more than that.

MODERATOR: What is the irreducible minimum that you think should be shot at for a reasonable wage?

MR. EPSTEIN: Well, I think there is somebody I am very anxious to get, and he or she is not an already well-established actor who feels he can take a vacation from a thousand dollar a week movie contract and go off and do a season of repertory. There are many people like that who do and will come for $350 or $400. But then there is the young actor still on the way up who doesn't have an established position, and I think that if I can say, "Come to Guthrie and stay here for $500 or $550 a week for 45 weeks or 40 weeks," they will come. They will not come for $300 or $350.

MR. SULLIVAN: It should be commensurate with what a skilled young professional would get in some of the other professions. We are not talking about circus clowns here. He could be a circus clown. Sorry, circus.

MR. GOLDSBY: They are getting fewer and fewer.

MR. SULLIVAN: But what does a good young lawyer or good young executive in the corporations get? That's what these people deserve. If they are championship actors, they should be paid. I would say 25 to 30 thousand, not $50,000. Twenty, anyway.

MR. EPSTEIN: Around 20 to 25 thousand a year.

MR. YOUNG: He is a professional and he is making his living from his activity.

MR. EPSTEIN: Otherwise he is going to say, "I don't want to stay for you for $12,500, I want to go off and make $50,000 or $75,000 immediately, because I can. I'm hot."

MR. YOUNG: But for $20,000, $25,000 he might do it, because he is interested in the artistry.

MR. EPSTEIN: Right. I'd rather stay warm and not be hot and do things that are going to develop me as an artist rather than selling myself as a commodity.

MR. YOUNG: He is still in an industry that takes care of its family.

MR. CRAWFORD: Do you, Mako, agree with this reasoning range as an aspiration?

MR. IWAMATSU: In this area it might be a little more difficult, because of Hollywood being right next-door to it, a phone call away, and hop in a car and you can split. However, I don't think any one here is paying a top of like $500 or $550, you know, like the Mark Taper Forum. I think Gordon Davidson pays like -- of course he hires actors on per show basis. Everyone gets flat $250 or $275, whatever, and during that 10 weeks or 8 weeks, you know, he is not allowed to break the contract to do commercial or TV or pictures.

MR. EPSTEIN: I think their top is around $300.

MR. SULLIVAN: It's probably gone up.

MR. EPSTEIN: I don't think it is over $350.

MR. IWAMATSU: But the point, let me finish, but then there are a pool of actors here, movie actors who used to do stage work, but turned into movie actors and television actors, who are willing to do that. It is almost like going to a therapy type of situation. Okay, for eight weeks I won't take any jobs, I will do O'Neill and this or that, which is fine. But going back to a decent way of living, being able to provide for the family, you are talking about for your skilled trade, well, I think there are a host of actors who would rather stay in the theatre, period. For those I think I have to go along with what you stated. I would answer, "Right, somewhere in the $500, $750, somewhere thereabouts, you know."

MODERATOR: How long a period of time should the actor receive this?

MR. EPSTEIN: You mean $550 for how long? Ten months, ten months.

MR. SULLIVAN: That is a good point to make. The actor who feels it is now or never, nothing or everything, I'm rich or poor, is going to have to go for that money.

MR. EPSTEIN: Of course.

MR. SULLIVAN: But if he knows that there are these theatres around that can pay him a living wage, he will stay with that and think as an artist and is not going to feel somebody is selling a face that's going to fall in next year, so sell it now.

MR. EPSTEIN: I have just come from Yale after 10 years in that drama school. I know a whole generation of young actors, some of them are brilliant, some of them are just good and I notice they stand on the threshold of their lives now and that they feel that if they don't sell themselves to the highest bidders, they are slitting their own throats forever. So we know what that means.

MR. GOLDSBY: That means they go to Hollywood.

MR. EPSTEIN: To Hollywood straight into television and they are lost to the theatre and the implications of this are disastrous, and in that sense when you say that the theatre is doing very, very well, the theatre is not doing very, very well. There is part of the theatre doing well, not whether it can afford to keep on producing and turning out work, but keeps on losing its best people to an industry that gobbles them up.

MR. YOUNG: Not only disastrous to the theatre, though, sometimes it is to the actor's psychological well-being. It become disastrous to him, because when he has done two years of a series, he is bugged to death. He just wants to get out. But he now cannot get out because maybe he has a contract that ties him up.

MR. EPSTEIN: He has a house, he has a ranch, he has a car.

MR. YOUNG: Right, an economic status, that he must keep up.

MR. SULLIVAN: And he has become that face. When the series goes off, where does he go to?

MR. YOUNG: He is already typed and they won't accept him in anything else. It becomes really disastrous with that person now.

MODERATOR: How many institutions should be given this kind of opportunity? And what is the size of a company, a core company?

MR. GOLDSBY: The problem is, it seems to me, unrealistic to assume that a professional actor should be like a corporate lawyer. I don't think in American society, I don't know any society set up like that, except for an unidentifiable small ring of people who are in the National Theatres, whoever they are, and in this company you could identify I don't know how many theatres that might be in this category where the actors ought to be paid $20,000, and earn it. But there wouldn't be a large number of those institutions, surely. They probably should be selected in the major cities, if you are going to have one in New York and Washington and Chicago and the Guthrie and San Francisco and Los Angeles, and maybe one or two others, I don't know, so that you could identify these slots that you are talking about Otherwise you have got 80 percent of Actors' Equity also out of work, and most of those people in Equity are not

the kind of actor you are talking about. They are just not, and that goes back to how you identify the professional who has the quality of Richardson or who have a voice of several octaves and can move and think and feel in complex ways. I would think you would have to put limits on that, and not say "All professional actors should be paid what lawyers are paid." I don't think that would make any sense.

Secondly, my position in this, coming from the other, I have worked in these big theatres, and I have also worked now in the other end. I am going back in my life to the beginning in a garage. Okay. Now the problem there is not of $20,000 ayear, the problem is that all the artists work for nothing, and some of the artists are every bit as talented as the people working across the bay in ACT for $600 a week. Those people who are working for absolutely zero, they are working out of love of performance, and because they believe in the mission of finding writers. And younger actors, at least, are staying around -- I don't know how long they will stay around -- they will eventually have to leave. They are now making their money in a poetry program supported by the Office of Education. In other words, they all have some other way of making a living. People who are making money in the theatre, survival money, are not the artists. They are the company managers, and what we need is somebody to make money as a technical director, somebody to make money as a janitor, somebody to make money as an office worker, somebody to make money as a public relations person -- those jobs we can't get volunteers for. We can, fortunately, get the actor who is the center of the theatre. The most important artist in the theatre is always the one who ends up not being paid, because there are more actors than there are people who run trucks, for instance.

MR. EPSTEIN: Or he works with a passion, and it is pretty hard to find a janitor who will wield a broom with passion.

MR. GOLDSBY: So it makes you feel very guilty as the head of things like this to know that you are asking this contribution from the actor, and he is the one that is not getting anything. So I would think again, if we talk about needs, we need money for survival, I would say minimum wage survival, of people who will do the jobs that are necessary to keep the building going, and then if we had our real desire, we would be able to pay the major part of the actors, let's say, 7, 8, 10 actors a year, some kind of minimum wage to stay in the area and make a minimal living. That would be nice.

MR. SULLIVAN: Do you use CETA?

MR. GOLDSBY: Yes, we have CETA. It's been a great help. One of the smart things the government has done. CETA provides us with a staff. We have a fairly large staff with CETA on our side, but they are on CETA.

The problem with CETA, of course, is paying the people who don't have any skill, who have been unemployed for a year, so you are getting people who say, "Yes, I'll be your technical director. I want to be a technical director," and then he doesn't know how to do it. You don't have anybody there that can teach him. If you had someone that was a technical director who could then teach this CETA person, you would have a much better and healthier organization and theatre, right.

MR. YOUNG: That is what we always preach to people when we talk about CETA. They have so many restrictions that would allow the professional musician, in our case, the same thing with actors, to work, that the professional musician isn't even going to get the chance of employment with CETA. They are going to get a guy who aspires to be a musician, doesn't know anything about music. He aspires, he can strum a couple of chords on a guitar, he has been out of work the requisite number of weeks to qualify for the CETA program, and so we hire him, and they say we are putting musicians to work. They aren't. They are putting people who couldn't make a living anywhere in music, and here's the poor professional who has worked maybe one week, he has not had the requisite unemployment situation, and now he cannot get this job that this nonprofessional has gotten, and CETA says we are putting musicians to work. That is something that we are talking to CETA about, to get some other type of ruling to apply to the artists, because we are a different world than the guy who goes to the factory and turns this screw for a living, and does that all the time, or the guy that goes to another type of work and does the same thing all day. It is not the same thing. You can't put an artist into the same program as the guy who is working for a manufacturer.

MR. GOLDSBY: It helps us, and I'd rather have it than not, let me say it that way, because we have managed to find ways to get people employed now that we wanted to get employed, and we are seeing they are staying employed, not unemployed when we finally get them in. So it is a good program in terms of being a better program than not having it.

So the actors can have a place in which they can perform and playwrights have a place where their plays can be seen. That is what we need. The hardest thing about my kind of theatre, especially for somebody who is working, used to working in the professional situation, is the lack of at least one really skilled person in each major area of the theatre. In our theatre, for example, had a good company manager, which we do have fortunately, but if we also had a good technical director so that we are not spending hours and hours of agony and time because people don't know how to do things, teaching them, finding somebody when somebody doesn't show up. I'm sure you must have the same problem.

MR. IWAMATSU: Yes.

MR. GOLDSBY: I was just at the Los Angeles Actors' Theatre last night, you know, and here's people staying up all night, and they don't have one person to really control the technical theatre, who knows how to solve problems or like we didn't have for PR. We hired somebody under CETA for a PR person. We had to turn down a good professional, because she had worked part-time in something. We hired a girl who thought she might like PR. We had her a whole year, and she found out she didn't like PR. She didn't like newspapers. Of, God, we had a problem.

MR. SULLIVAN: I know her.

MR. GOLDSBY: You know her?

MR. SULLIVAN: I worked with her.

MR. YOUNG: It is completely frustrating when you get into a situation like this. He should know what should be needed, he should know what he should have, yet because of the exigencies of the situation, and because of the restrictions put on a program like this, he can't get that person.

MR. GOLDSBY: And the person also stays unemployed and we can't hire him.

MR. YOUNG: And that frustrates him.

MR. GOLDSBY: It doesn't help society, either.

MR. EPSTEIN: It is a self-defeating program.

MR. SULLIVAN: Still, it is well-meant.

MR. GOLDSBY: It is a step in the right direction. I am telling you at least we have some bodies around and they are salaried and that is a lot different than having nobody.

MR. YOUNG: That's right.

MR. GOLDSBY: So you know it shows the government is at least thinking. Also the government is not handing out money for being unemployed, they are trying to get people to work for it. That is certainly a good idea, so maybe it has been useful.

To turn to what I was speaking of, with the new fund support. We are talking about having good people who can do their job well at any level. Your level is $25,000, you get your actor to make your theatre. For me, if I had $150, I could hold the young actor in the area for a while. The older people -- that is a whole different area. Let's talk about inside

support. By inside, we mean keeping the building going. Outside, what you need primarily is audience development. You need people there. You need full houses, and that means you need subscriptions, and in order to get subscriptions you need capital. The subscription thing now has gotten almost ridiculously predictable. Danny Newman solved all problems of everybody in the theatre if you just follow his formula and get a subscription. If you are selling Shakespeare and well-known plays, fine, but it doesn't work if you are not -- at least not as well. Maybe it would. I think he probably would disagree with me. He would think it would work with anything, even soap, because selling is selling.

MR. SULLIVAN: It did work for soap, that's where he got the idea.

MR. GOLDSBY: Anyway, the need for funds, that is capital for small theatres to develop subscription campaigns that will in turn bring the audience in, so that the income begins to do better in relation to the overall budget. Most small theatres like mine are operating on a very small percentage of box office in relation to the total budget. Let's say a quarter or a third, at most a half, and the rest has to come from grants. So I would think that the first need, the first primary need, is audience development, and also an audience -- I don't know how to do this -- and people are doing a lot of it -- audience --

MR. YOUNG: Appreciation?

MR. GOLDSBY: No -- yes, you were talking about before, the community beginning to get involved, beginning to learn about things and being turned on to the theatre and talking about it. Education.

MR. SULLIVAN: It has to be cheaper, it has to be easier for people with no money to go to the theatre.

MR. GOLDSBY: That's another thing, we keep our price down to $3, cheaper than a movie.

MR. SULLIVAN: As a matter of fact, most small theatres do that very well. It is the bigger theatres that have the problems. I mean they are starving anyway, so they pass that on.

MR. GOLDSBY: If you don't have a low ticket price, you can't attract anybody to the new plays.

MR. SULLIVAN: It is just as cheap now to go to a small theatre as a first-run movie.

MR. GOLDSBY: That is where we are trying tc hold it now.

MR. SULLIVAN: You cannot ask the government for money to support theatre, unless the theatre can then say that with that money one of the things we are doing is making theatre more available to our communities. You cannot ask the government to subsidize an elitist activity, unfortunately, maybe it is a spiritually elitist one, but not an economically elitist one.

MR. YOUNG: One thing we do in music here in Los Angeles, your recording industry, they do have to pay so much because they make records which displaces musicians, so they have to pay money into a fund that will provide live music free to people all over the country. Now, in conjunction with that, we ask the city to contribute so much, the county to contribute so much, and we provide free concerts, jazz, western music, symphony music, all over the city, all over Los Angeles County. I'm sure this happens in other areas where there are locals, free music for the people.

MR. GOLDSBY: Wouldn't that be marvelous for theatre?

MR. YOUNG: I think it is this type of thing we need in all of the arts.

MR. SULLIVAN: This could be done, and one way it could be done, if the Screen Actors' Guild and Actors' Equity merge into one big union, and then the industry, the television and movie industry would have to pay a percentage of the money of the gross, box office gross. to provide free or reduced rate attendance of live performances of drama, which means stage.

MR. GOLDSBY: That is true. For example, a million dollar contract that one actor gets for making a film that goes around the world; somehow what about the actors that are probably equal just in the terms of talent, how would you know?

MR. SULLIVAN: We have some guilt money from big oil now, and I want to see guilt money from big movies. It is so obvious why they should pay it, and they know it themselves, look at JAWS.

MR. GOLDSBY: Look at JAWS, millions and millions of dollars.

MR. SULLIVAN: I don't expect the commercial theatre would do that. I don't think the profits are anywhere near that size.

MR. YOUNG: But the electronics industry can afford it. It would take such a small percentage of their profits.

MR. SULLIVAN: All right, who was in JAWS? Richard Dreyfus was in JAWS?

MR. GOLDSBY: Yes.

MR. EPSTEIN: Roy Scheider.

MR. SULLIVAN: Nobody went to see JAWS because Richard Dreyfus was in it, but perhaps he was a valuable part of it. We first saw him in Theatre West here. Nick Nolte we first saw in the Met Theatre here. Why shouldn't Universal be sending some money to some kind of a fund that could help support these smaller theatres? There is no reason in the world why they shouldn't, and I don't know what the government can do about that.

MR. GOLDSBY: The unions could be a way. We know they are not going to do it unless they are forced to.

MR. SULLIVAN: But the unions could be an intermediary. I don't see that happening until the Screen Actors Guild and Equity get closer together.

There is only one musicians' union. I don't know why there shouldn't be only one performers' union.

MR. YOUNG: They are proliferated all over the world. They may have AGMA, which is the long-haired musicians, the concert artists and the operatic people that work in opera. Then they have the Screen Actors Guild which goes for motion pictures, TV film. They have the Screen Extras Guild, which is mostly motion picture and TV film. They have AFTRA, which goes to television for videotape.

MR. EPSTEIN: How about AGVA?

MR. YOUNG: AGVA is for night club entertainers and Equity is for theatres.

MR. EPSTEIN: Yes.

MR. YOUNG: So they are so spread out that if they did get together, they could certainly do a much better job, like the musicians. We don't care. We don't care whether you play the jazz, rock or whatever or hit a tambourine. We want you in that musicians' union, therefore we got them all together, no matter what their field, so we can present a united front for everybody.

MR. SULLIVAN: I am sure the advantages in bargaining is so immense from the labor point of view, I don't know why they haven't done it years ago.

MR. EPSTEIN: They have been talking about it for years. I don't know why they haven't done it, either.

MR. SULLIVAN: A performers' union.

MR. GOLDSBY: Because territory is a very strong instinct in people, and people have carved out territory and they don't want to share it.

MR. YOUNG: A sphere of influence, like Russia and United States.

MR. GOLDSBY: The management of Actors' Equity don't want to merge with SAG, because then SAG officials will then take over? Who will take over? It would be a titanic kind of struggle. It would be like when was it, when the Teamsters went together with -- or the AFL-CIO, remember when they tried to merge?

MR. YOUNG: You have the economic issues of those who are running the show as to who is going to be involved, a very human thing.

MR. GOLDSBY: It is hard, unless you work together.

MR. SULLIVAN: I am saying that theatre has to prove it is interested in extending its audience to everybody. A theatre that isn't, I think, has a harder time in this country. The Comedie Francaise, even the Comedie Francaise in the afternoon will have 200 hundred seats there for half a dollar, you know, that are put aside and anybody can go, you just line up. You want to have that true of every big American theatre.

MR. EPSTEIN: I know that the Guthrie has an enormous outreach program. And also that there are all sorts of reduced rate tickets, and there are also plans by which the people can come to the theatre, I think -- there was always a student rush line -- but now I think this season they have instituted a public rush line on certain days of the week.

MR. SULLIVAN: That's like the Comedie Francaise. Most theatres I am talking about, in fact, do this now, but I am saying it has to be universal.

MR. EPSTEIN: Yes.

MR. YOUNG: That is good business, because what they are really doing is building an audience. The hope is that they would open their eyes to see what they are really doing.

MR. SULLIVAN: Another thing, too, that I think about accessibility to audience, is the children's theatre or young peoples theatre, which I am very interested in, and we have very little of good of it in this country. The Minneapolis Children's Theatre is superb, but it hasn't been done elsewhere because it is just too expensive to do. But I would want to see every important non-profit theatre have a wing that devotes itself to the young people, and that doesn't mean kiddieland, either.

MR. GOLDSBY: No, it doesn't mean doing some crappy things for kids, because they don't count. Ingmar Bergman took a major company once a year, as I understand it, and rehearsed a play and didn't allow anyone into it who wasn't a high school student, and did the thing just for that audience, because he knew those kids were going to become the audience.

MR. SULLIVAN: Sweden is a very good model there.

MR. EPSTEIN: I think we have a model like that in this country, Adrian Hall in Providence did the same thing for years when he set up the Trinity Square Players. They did not have an adult audience. It took them a long time to build it. In the meantime they were going out and playing to schools. They did that for 10 years, and those kids grew up, graduated from high school, got married, and came to this theatre. That's where his audience was.

MR. GOLDSBY: That's what we do. We have a poetry program that goes to schools now that has been developed over a few years and has gotten lots of education support, and they do 10 programs, and now we have four actors that get paid for that. It is a very good program. Those kids begin to know about the actors and we hope they will grow up, not only liking poetry, but also come to the theatre.

MR. YOUNG: I think we are doing this now. The Los Angeles Philharmonic has a certain number of concerts for children. The musicians' union is part of the program in expanding the music performance trust fund a couple years ago. A couple years ago we had what was called Jazz in the School. Jazz is the indigenous music for America. We had programs. We not only presented the music, but commentators were telling the kids how jazz developed, its beginnings in Africa, the ethnic influence because slaves were in the Caribbean, the big bands, the Latin bands, the Dixieland bands, and we are now trying to get CETA to adopt a program where we are going to present this not only to a few selected high schools, because we had only $40,000-$30,000 which came from the Union-but now we are asking for over half a million dollars to do this, where we are going to send out bands with commentators. Because again it is good business, you are building a future audience, and not only this. When these people grow up, they will have had the background that most Americans have not had. They you are beginning to develop the type of social fabric connection for people in this country, as you have in Europe, and I think that is terrific.

MR. SULLIVAN: It is also a way of supporting actors, and there is a group in L.A., one of many groups, called The Performing Tree, which helps book artists into schools. I know about this from my end as a critic. Also I am a parent, and I am a parent representative in a little school where my kids go to school. I know the PTA has decided it could afford three to four hundred dollars a year to bring in mimes and the World Jazz Ensemble is one of the groups we hired. Yes, that's a way to keep the theatre alive, and to open the audiences.

MODERATOR: What is the role of music in the theatre and the economic implications of it?

MR. YOUNG: All I can say is this. The musicians' union is in the position of having to provide contracts that will give their musicians who are fortunate enough to work -- and remember I said the greatest percentage don't make their full income from music -- a living wage or a wage that is commensurate with their artistry. Remember that. Remember, a musician who is competent has spent hours and years practicing that instrument. Now, when he gets to the place where he is a professional and he goes to that theatre, he wants a wage that is commensurate with his artistry and the hours he has put in learning his instrument. You just don't go into the theatre and suddenly play that show. Because you spent your time in the woodshed learning that instrument, so you can now go into the theatre and play that music. So we are in the position of saying, "Yes, our musicians are well paid, but they deserve what they get." It is up to the theatre, and I think it is up to the government and everybody else, to get into the act to see that all the professionals that are participating, and this not only means musicians, but actors as well, are given a wage commensurate with their ability, so the theatre can flourish. They do it in Europe. They should do it here.

MR. EPSTEIN: One of the reasons it doesn't happen here is because the musicians' union have been successful in raising the minimum wage so far beyond the minimum wage of actors, that no theatre that builds budgets around actors can afford to hire musicians.

MR. YOUNG: To the layman it looks like a very exorbitant thing, but remember also we have the pressure from our musicians. We are there and we have to provide them with contracts that we feel are commensurate with their abilities. Again, if you look at the difference, what they get in the theatre and what they get in the electronics aspect of it you can see the enormous difference in salaries that you get when you work in TV, videotape or television film, or phonograph records, and the pittance that you get when you work in the theatre, there is quite a difference, because from the electronics aspect, when I was a conductor, I would make $50 an hour when I conducted. When I wrote the music, I would make $10 a page, and a page is only four bars. But now when you go into the theatre, we have to get our scale down, because they can't afford to pay the money that they can in the electronics industry, because that is a monster all of its own. So in comparison to what we get in the electronics field, our rates are reasonable in the theatre.

For the poor theatre guy that has to meet this budget, certainly it is exorbitant. He has gotten so many other things, other aspects in putting on the play, in the theatre he looks at the musical costs, and he wants to blow his brains out, I guess.

MR. GOLDSBY: I remember in the early days of the ACT they had to hire musicians, and all they could use them for was a fanfare out in front of the building, and they were paid very high salaries, and all they could do was just blow a trumpet in front of the theatre because there was no music called for in the play.

MR. IWAMATSU: In contrast to what you are talking about, I'm not familiar with the structure of the musicians' union, for instance, like Actors' Equity, they have so many categories, in other words, Hollywood area theatre contract, Lorts A, B, C. D, E, and oftentimes I do know in the past when I was doing off-Broadway shows in New York, I think I was getting $140 a week, whereas we had one musician, he was making, I don't know, it seemed like three times as much as I was.

MR. YOUNG: He probably was.

MR. IWAMATSU: But the point is again that I think that in earlier discussions, why are the actors alike? Okay, there is funding for writers, there is funding for this, there is funding for that, and administrative, blah, blah, blah, but there is not to my knowledge, I can't recall any funding to

actors, actors who tried to develop themselves, the actor who is trying to go to, let's say, possibly artist-in-residence type of program, maybe theatres, theatre foundations, maybe something like that; but actors usually have to work collectively, numbers, you know, and I don't know the reason why we are the last, but we are.

MR. YOUNG: In the electronics industry, though, you are first. You get the salaries that actors, members of Screen Actors Guild, get who go in to do a television program. Now you are really in the high rent district.

MR. SULLIVAN: Do you have a scale whereby if I ran a small theatre, I don't have to pay as much for a musician as a large theatre?

MR. YOUNG: We have a small theatre guild and it is based upon the number of seats in the theatre.

MR. SULLIVAN: You don't have anything like the Equity waiver rule in L.A. where an actor can work in a theatre under 100 seats, for whatever he can get or nothing?

MR. YOUNG: We do put a specific scale on it, but we do have a scale where say 99 people or seats, or fewer than 300, or something like that. I don't know exactly the scale, because our union is so big we have specialists in all these fields, but at least we do have scales that will apply. You come to our board of directors, you have to prove your point, we can make adjustments in our scales that will help you in your situation, but we are very afraid that we will look up and the guy that is coming in and pleading poverty ends up exploiting our musicians. That is why we have to have a board of directors consider each request on its own merits. But there are times when we say no, the minimums don't apply, where the skills will apply. There are times when we will say for a number of weeks we will give you this concession, because we want you to get started, because if you don't run, then our musicians don't work. So it depends upon the situation.

MR. GOLDSBY: What I think we are discovering with the non-profit 99-seat waiver thing, and I suspect also in the major theatres, is the problem of the short-term grant support by private foundations, where the private foundation wishes to tell you they will support you, but they want to limit this in time, because presumably you are supposed to get on your own feet. In other words, it is an idea that is connected to the fact that what you are really trying to do is become a commercial theatre.

Now, government does not do that with scientists, they know much better than that in the sciences. They don't expect the private laboratory

studying basic stuff to turn out a toothpaste. They understand that in science, and the government is very sophisticated in its approach to the arts, which is the quality of life in the whole society. And all that means is that what theatre needs is some degree of continuity in time, so that each year you don't have to beg the board of a foundation, the Louisville Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation or some foundation, to please give you the money for the next year and then wait on a cash flow problem for six months until they tell you, "Yes, we will give it to you." Meantime you have to borrow against it, and so forth and so on. What we need is continuity, and that can be provided only by the people's representatives, which is the Congress; in other words, the whole point of doing theatre is for the people. We don't function without audiences. That is the whole idea, that is, to be the mirror of our society, and so what we need is the government moving in place of the private foundations, which is only giving us a carrot every year, and then saying, "Well, maybe if you are good, we will give it to you one more year, but remember the axe will fall next year unless you get some other." I would suspect probably major theatres as well as the seminal or restricted-seats theatres, both need some degree of support. If we had what we would like, we would like some continuity in the major areas to allow us to survive, like management and technical director and a minimal staff, a minimal kind of support so we can continue functioning, without sinking. Does that make sense, what I am saying?

MR. SULLIVAN: How does the government know who is worth this money?

MR. GOLDSBY: That is a big question, and I am sure that must be difficult. I mean, sitting in Washington and reading reports, once I did read these things, I was on one of those panels.

MR. SULLIVAN: They all sound so wonderful.

MR. GOLDSBY: I think it is like any other way of finding out who is good at what they do, there are ways of finding out.

MR. EPSTEIN: Go around and look at it.

MR. GOLDSBY: Maybe it is the old buddy system, where you say, "I trust this guy to the point of, 'you go look at this theatre, go talk to the director.'" When you are in the profession for 20 years, you can begin to tell the difference.

MR. YOUNG: There are ways.

MR. GOLDSBY: There are ways of telling. Like at the beginning, you do know a concert pianist is a professional. You may like one rather than the other, but you know that they are professional.

MR. YOUNG: They are both professionals at what they do.

MR. GOLDSBY: If you go to these theatres, now that is another area, maybe somebody could do more traveling and looking at places in order to decide, but the National Endowment is doing pretty well, they get around.

MR. SULLIVAN: I think the National Endowment is doing very well by sending competent people out to look, and they have taken those's people's word for things. It has to come down to that human judgment.

MR. GOLDSBY: Oh, absolutely essential.

MR. SULLIVAN: The government would love to have a computer that could tell them, but there isn't any.

MR. GOLDSBY: There isn't any, but there must be the judgment of people that develop in the Guthrie and develop in the major theatres. You can trust Alvin to come around and look at the work, and he is going to know what is good about it, and where the weaknesses are. You may have two good actors and two not so good, but he knows the seriousness of the individuals.

MR. IWAMATSU: In terms of our needs, it seems to me there is a need for kind of a regional revolving type of situation where, when we know we are being funded, but the check doesn't arrive, you know, for six months, nine months, we can borrow against it, and we can go to the bank. There are people who can't go to that bank. In that sense there has to be some kind of revolving fund placed, let's say, in five major districts or six major districts, where we can go when we know the money is coming. All right. Then at a very, very low rate of interest, these organizations could possibly survive. I think a number of organizations have gone under because of that in the past, and knowing that such revolving funds exist would help a lot of small theatres the following year, or even, like you were talking about, getting funded by private foundations. Maybe we can rely on something of that type.

MR. SULLIVAN: Evolving or revolving?

MR. IWAMATSU: Revolving.

MR. SULLIVAN: Some comes in and some goes out.

MR. GOLDSBY: One foundation in the San Francisco Bay area, the Zellerbach people have been very sophisticated about that. They realize that and provide cash flow loans, interests free, to theatres like ours. That is a very good idea, because it helps and doesn't cost them anything, they just don't make money off of it like a bank. But they don't lose anything, either, and it is a very helpful kind of idea.

MR. EPSTEIN: Also very rare.

MODERATOR: Should there be some kind of public funds used for cash flow problems?

MR. IWAMATSU: Public funds, backed by private funds.

MR. SULLIVAN: I have one more need, and I'm not sure it is a need, but I would like to know what you think. I have felt for a long time we need a national theatre magazine.

MR. GOLDSBY: Theatre Arts?

MR. SULLIVAN: I have heard of Theatre Arts. Theatre Arts was a wonderful magazine, went back to 1913. It went along, it said let's have regional theatre, and said it for 40 years, and when regional theatre came, it went out of business. I think if something like Theatre Arts came back -- and this means a little bound magazine, doesn't mean TV Guide or performance journal, but neither does it mean a Life Magazine, something in the middle -- that such a magazine could eventually pay for itself, though wouldn't right away. Since we do have a far flung network of theatres now, I think it could be sold in these theatres. I think that the academic theatre, I think there would be a big market for it there. What would get it together would be that it would be one bulletin board that we would all read and hate sometimes, I'm sure, but still it would be there. I'd love to see somebody provide seed money for that.

MR. GOLDSBY: Zeratini is at Berkeley now. He is 90 some years old. We have talked to him a lot, and he is 90 some years old, and he is a phenomenal mind.

I think what he said is extremely important, that there be a magazine on the model of Theatre Arts which has pictures and articles and is not proselytizing a point of view about ritual theatre, or whatever. It should be a professional journal of what is really quality work around the country.

MR. SULLIVAN: Every point of view should be in it, however.

MR. GOLDSBY: Yes, exactly, that sort of representative coverage.

MR. YOUNG: Are we back to the public sector?

MODERATOR: Do you believe there has been an increase in corporate giving to theatre?

MR. YOUNG: I think at least in this area there is an increase as far as the corporate sector is concerned. In fact, the organization I mentioned, the Confederation of Artists is giving its second concert on the 29th. We are cosponsored by Arco, and I think one other company. They are helping us in this, and we have been getting funds from them. So I think there is an appreciation on the part of the corporate structure now to help in this aspect. I think that it is going to improve and it will really depend upon the way the money is used, to be sure it is used in the right manner.

MR. EPSTEIN: I think it has been increasing throughout the years in the Guthrie. I think it is very responsible for the existence of the Guthrie. They are trying to build an endowment now and I think most of the money is coming from the corporate structure. However, I think that each place is going to be developing at a different rhythm, and because the corporate structure has been so involved in Minneapolis, it is probably now going to have to move into the government area and relieve the corporate structure from the responsibility that it has taken.

MR. IWAMATSU: In our case it is not evident, because we haven't been getting anything from the corporate area, and we have been trying, but the answer that we would normally get is that, "Well, you Asian-Americans collectively in this country represent less than 1.5 percent of the population, therefore why bother?" That is the basic attitude.

MR. SULLIVAN: Mako, what about these big Japanese banks and people like that that are investing here?

MR. IWAMATSU: Ho, ho, ho, they are worse. They are worse. They are more interested in profit orientation.

MR. YOUNG: Really Americanized.

MR. IWAMATSU: They are worse than American corporations.

MR. GOLDSBY: We found a big corporation like Exxon, for example, will want to put money into the arts, into something that is extremely visible to large numbers of people who will buy gas, so it is still in the realm of advertising. They have also not gotten sophisticated enough to realize that Exxon would have gotten a lot more money out of supporting the Provincetown Playhouse and the development of Eugene O'Neill than they would out of putting on one commercial in a television show that is gone the next day. So far there is no way that the private sector has really seen that point.

MR. SULLIVAN: Only to some extent. The L.A. Actors Theatre did William Katell's THEATRE IN AMERICA, which you know about, including CYRANO DE BERGERAC, and got $10,000 I think back from Exxon or one of the oil companies that sponsored it.

MR. GOLDSBY: That was on national television.

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes, but he is asking has there been any support, and I say there is some.

MR. GOLDSBY: Oh, yes, there is. Of course, oh, yes, there is. Some of the private foundations like the Ford Foundation, are pulling out of supporting the arts, for example, not giving the same money thay have in the past.

MR. EPSTEIN: Rockefeller cut way back.

MR. SULLIVAN: I wonder why corporations haven't been more willing, as they have in opera, to sponsor production? You know, you see a NIGHT AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA, this presented by a grant from such-and-such a corporation. You never see that.

MR. GOLDSBY: They have gotten a grant for production -- maybe, yes I think they did.

MR. SULLIVAN: I would like to see stage theatre subsidized by somebody.

MR. EPSTEIN: I think music is more recognizable, the standards are established, and therefore they feel safer buying it and when, I believe it is Exxon, I'm not absolutely certain, but it put money into the television industry, into public television, they bought English productions, and brought over English productions, which is not very good for the development of the American profession.

MR. SULLIVAN: William Windom is going around now with a show based on the RISE OF ERNIE PYLE. William Windom is doing a one-man show. He got the funding for that from one of the oil companies, I suppose with the hope of making some kind of a special. I think that kind of initiative on his part to get that money there is wonderful.

MODERATOR: Are there ways other than dollars that the federal government, that the Congress, for example, can assist in addition to dollars in obtaining the kind of needs that you have been talking about?

MR. SULLIVAN: I know that there are laws that can be made, tax la laws can be made. I know on the city level one thing we desperately need is some kind of easy way to start up a small theatre. I know the thicket of fire regulations, safety codes, all of that you have to go through, it is discouraging. If there could be a uniform Safety Act for theatres that could apply to small theatres under 50 seats or over 100 seats, between 150 to 500, 500 to 1,000, and then up, that would apply in every community very easily, that would be fairly easy to live up to, something like that would make the lives of many small theatre people a lot easier, and wouldn't cost anything.

MR. YOUNG: I think in the main, though, dollars are the things that I feel are things Congress should be providing.

MR. GOLDSBY: I think the unemployment factor is something. Why should the government pay all of these unemployed actors money when they can help theatres put them to work acting? They are spending millions and millions of dollars on unemployment.

MR. YOUNG: And restore their dignity, too.

MR. GOLDSBY: All you need there is some legislative panelist to work in the CETA direction, put that 86 percent of the Actors' Union who are out of work to work in these theatres by giving them some kind of a minimum wage which is at least the equivalent of the umployment, and the actor can improve himself and work at his craft and the audiences get something out of it, the writers get developed, the whole thing gets much more populist, if you want, connected.

MR. YOUNG: We have a precedent for this, the old WPA federal theatre.

MR. GOLDSBY: That is what probably people will bring up.

MR. YOUNG: That employed actors, musicians, professional people like Bill Robinson, who went around the country in the HOT MIKADO, and a lot of good things came out of that.

MODERATOR: What about the question of tax abatements?

MR. YOUNG: I don't know whether the same system applies to theatre, but businesses can write off tax losses as far back as five years. I think that the theatrical business has the same type of advantages, which they might have, I don't know, but at least they should have the advantage to go back and write off losses, because they are struggling, struggling like any other business to keep going.

MR. GOLDSBY: I don't think taxes are a problem for non-profit corporations, because they do have a lot of special considerations. I don't feel taxes are any problem for non-profit theatres now.

MR. YOUNG: I still think we come back to dollars.

MR. EPSTEIN: We are always going to come back to dollars. I think we should quote Lorelei Lee, a kiss on the hand is very nice, but a diamond bracelet is forever.

MR. GOLDSBY: I think there is another thing. If the federal government were able through persuasion of one kind or another to get state and city governments involved, another thing about the difference between America and Europe, is that in Europe cities do a lot. In America the cities do nothing. I mean, to get support of a local Chamber of Commerce or city is worse than getting support from the National Endowment. So if the federal government did move in this direction, I think ideally, and also for political reasons, it would make more sense to say, off the top of my head, if you had a third coming from the federal government and a third coming from the state and a third coming from the local city, you might have a healthier kind of thing, because then the theatre would be connected more to the community through the local support. Right? They have to win the support from their city government and so forth, and by providing something that is worthwhile to the local community, in other words, that might be something that is non -- is that dollars?

MR. EPSTEIN: I think that is dollars.

MR. YOUNG: That is dollars again.

MR. GOLDSBY: But it is also how, for instance, some states do much better than others. New York State does much better than other states. The Bay Area is particularly poor in corporate support, for instance, whereas in Minneapolis they have much more enlightened business support.

MR. YOUNG: California is the most populous state in the union. I think we are lucky if we are getting a little over $4 million from the state, and that is an improvement over what we have had in the past.

MR. IWAMATSU: I would like to have emphasized the fact that basically there are three types of theatres -- theatres that are founded by writers, theatres founded by directors, and theatres founded by actors. Oftentimes, theatres founded by writers and directors seem to be drawing more funding than theatres formed by actors. I would urge them to consider actors a vital part of theatre, period.

MR. YOUNG: I think that the federal government, and of course this applies to all of us, but I think especially the federal government should take the lead in setting the tone for the acceptance of the arts all over the country, so that we can someday have the same situation as we do in Europe where a child has grown up being able to see Shakespeare, being able to hear Beethoven, American composers, plays written by American writers. If the federal government sets the tone and assists and encourages the states, cities and counties to participate in this, I think we are going to be better off. We need dollars. We need dollars from everywhere but I

think the federal government has to be right out there and saying, "This is the way it should be. Our administration is for this. We want this type of thing to happen," and this way it will one thing, it will keep the actor employed, keep him off the unemployment rolls, restore his dignity, give the actor who has a profession or the musician or other artist who has a profession an opportunity to ply his trade at a decent living and to support his family and walk with his head high. We do it for the farmer, we do it for the airline industry, we do it for industry, and about every aspect of American business, but we do not do it for the artists.

I think we should look upon the arts as something that is just as necessary as General Motors or the farmer because they are feeding the body, we need to feed the spirit, you know. You cannot live by bread alone. You have got to have something to feed their spirit on or you are not going to have any kind of people but a lot of zombies in this country. I think it is necessary for the government to step right in there and take an active role and give us people in this artistic role a chance to ply our trade at a decent living and to hold our heads high. It will be good for the country, it will be good for us, and it will be good for everybody.

MR. SULLIVAN: I want a strong, serious, publicly supported theatre of the quality of the Guthrie, or better, in every major city in the United States.

MR. EPSTEIN: I think that if we are going to try to penetrate the government with our message, that above and beyond our particular needs, and we have many of them and we can enumerate them, that perhaps the government ought to consider really making a cabinet post out of this. We should have a Minister of Culture really incorporated into the government as a separate department, where the government has to recognize the importance of having that which you are saying and devote serious energy with appointments of individuals to execute the job. That is my recommendation.

MR. GOLDSBY: I would argue that they should take a look at their support of science, the National Science Foundation, and as a model for the relation between applied research and turning out weapons, and that they have a model there that would probably be equal on a legislative way with the force for the major theatres that Dan talked about, as well as have a selected number of high quality, small institutions that are doing this kind of seminal work in discovering new truths, that want to discover new truths, such as the O'Neill, and discover why we have never developed anything on the West Coast, you know, other centers like the O'Neill, not just the O'Neill, and have a small selected number of these seminal theatres that are doing work in finding the new writer, and support them so that they don't have to face every day the sacrifices that everybody makes in order to keep them going -- actors with no money for kids, they are hitchhiking in order to do a play. Why can't they get at least the minimum wage out of it?

I would think that the unemployment work substitute, artistic work for unemployment, would be helpful and would cost them no more, and to think about this relationship between the various levels of theatre.

I agree with Alvin, I don't think the commercial theatre is involved if you are making a profit out of something. That is sufficient. It doesn't need support.

MR. SULLIVAN: You mentioned your model weaponry and research and my model for the kind of theatre to be structured is found in a state like Sweden, in which people are interested in the arts. If we go to places like that, see if it can be done, establish a network of theatres that can meet the standards, it would mean a lot to the society of this country.

MR. GOLDSBY: For example, in Amsterdam, there is a small seminal research type organization which has now developed a whole process of moving into old people's homes, prisons, and they are then learning a great deal about the realities of those who are in institutions, which are turning into really significant social change. The theatre is a very powerful medium, it's thought of in that way, and that is why I think the small things may be very important. What Provincetown has done was very important to theatre. It wasn't big. It wasn't like the WATERGATE CLOSED DOORS or JAWS, but it produced Eugene O'Neill.

MR. YOUNG: There are a few things I would like to see. I would like to see more professionals on the advisory committee, as a start, on the various art commissions involved with the city councils. I would like to see commissions that are involved. We get people who are not professionals, a musician who has never made a living as a musician, never made a record, never played in a night club, and he is there advising them how to treat and what their attitudes towards professional musicians should be. I want to see professionals working on some of these boards. We have the experience. We have been there. We have faced audiences. We have to go out there and say, "This is what I do," and get the tomato in the face or get the plaudits of the audience. I think we need for all of us in the arts to move the professionals on these representative bodies everywhere, all over the country, state, county, federal government, and anywhere else arts are considered, because it is up to us. We set the professional standards and we have got to prove also on these boards that we have the knowledge and that we know what we are doing and know what these professional standards are.

MR. GOLDSBY: That is what is happening in California now, there is a strong move on not to move the professionals in the art councils, but to say that everybody is getting together and playing the same thing as to to professional work in the performing arts. I think it is a very real political thing, now, you know, that there is no skill involved if everybody gets together.

MR. YOUNG: It is a tragic situation.

MR. GOLDSBY: And if everybody gets together and plays games, that doesn't take professional work.

THEATRE RESEARCH PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

ROUND TABLE

October 20, 1977 -- 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Biltmore Hotel

Los Angeles, California

PARTICIPANTS:

Arthur Ballet, Office for Advanced Drama Research, University of Minnesota
Pat Don Aroma, IATSE
Stanley Eichelbaum, Critic
Jorge Huarte, Director
W. Duncan Ross, Artistic Director, Seattle Repertory Theatre

MODERATOR:

Robert W. Crawford

PRESENT:

Robert J. Anderson, Jr.
Sonia P. Maltezou

MODERATOR: Jorge, what would you say is the present role of for-profit and not-for-profit theatre in American society today?

MR. HUARTE: I think flatly and frankly the present role of professional theatre, both for profit and not for profit, is to serve a particular elite of society, those people who can afford whether it be the Shubert Theater in Century City that is charging $15 for Chorus Line or the Mark Taper Forum, which charges $5.50, and at best attempting to reach, you know, a more popular sector, but not really achieving that goal.

It seems that today the theatre is simply a means of making money on the commercial level. On the not-for-profit, I see very honest attempts to do good theatre, to nurture playwrights, to nurture designers and actors and directors, and what have you, but a very limited ability. They need subsidy by the millions, and they don't get it -- the ACT and the various not-for-profit and professional theatres across the country.

MR. HUARTE: Let's look at the Mark Taper Forum, the Center Theater Group here in Los Angeles attempting to nurture playwrights, to bring in new talent on all levels of production. It needs a subsidy, not only of the county, county aid, they receive federal funding, and certainly foundation funding, and it still is not enough to do all the things they would like to do. I know when they brought the Auto de Compadecida here a few years back, they still had to charge $5.50 minimum. They did not get the kind of people that theatre group is addressing themselves to in the theatre. They had to give away a lot of tickets and they did. I thought that was very noble of the group, but it was not a money-making venture, and unfortunately they have to stay alive in terms of doing theatre, in terms of continuing the work that they do.

MR. BALLET: I agree. Another thing, in fact, theatre is a small part of a large thing called theatre which includes the popular line television, motion pictures, and everything else, all lumped together. Theatre is involved. So I think of theatre in the legitimate sense of the word as a resource for the other mass industries. The playwrights come from us, the artists come from us, the designers, and of course, everybody, so that is one of the present day roles. The problem is that in the not-for-profit theatre very often those theatres are forced to consider the wrong reasons. They do some very interesting things, but they do them for all the wrong reasons. They always have to be aware of box office. They really should be aware of the fact that they are this resource. It's been told that the playwright gets put away in a little room and is not on the main scene and does not have the experience because the box office is important. The major theatres, such as the Guthrie years ago, I thought disgraceful even if very successful, it does ARSENIC AND OLD LACE. I don't understand why -- I do understand why, they need the money, but they are forced into a strange position. When we talk about a healthy one, I am not sure box office is the way to judge health, because we are in a sense living off of the past, without really producing enough out of our own world to replace that.

The other thing is I would assume that both of these kinds of theatres, at their healthiest, both commercial and not-for-profit theatre, would be very, very concerned with exploring the outermost reaches of experimentation, not simply repeating the cultural heritages that -- I said not simply repeating the cultural heritages, because I think the cultural heritage is obviously important, but they should be doing the very newest things, the things that are not going to get done in films.

What I am saying is they can't, my point, I guessed I slipped into the next category, that they can't do that, because they are constantly being restrained at the box office -- will it succeed, will enough people come, what percentage of capacity are you playing to -- as if that were relevant to the resource of the art itself. I don't mean to sound like a hopeless idealist, but that is a little cockamamie from my point of view.

It works everywhere. I go across the board, the Lorick, ACT, whatever they are, theatres, they all do their very best to get the hugest audience possible, and I am questioning that as a goal of the present day theatre. I am not sure that is what theatre can do. The theatre may have other functions that are equally valid or perhaps even more valid. I think it goes all the way down to the little storefront theatres that are trying to get little tiny grants of $1,000 or $2,000, and they are desperately trying to sell their tickets.

MR. HUARTE: The Auto de Compadecida is part of a national network of touring Chicano theatre groups along with other groups who are touring the country and actually do not have a theatre of their own that they really make any revenue from worth speaking of. They survive on their tours, such as the Provisional Theater or Organic Theater in Chicago.

MR. BALLET: Do they really survive on their tours or don't they also get subsidies?

MR. HUARTE: The Auto de Compadecida never received federal subsidies, they are seeking some now and have received a small federal grant.

MR. BALLET: But the others do?

MR. HUARTE: Some of the touring groups do. I am thinking in terms of Chicano groups. I know some of the non-Chicano groups do and some don't. For example, I know of some that pride themselves on not receiving any federal funding, they do a lot of touring.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Who in San Francisco does not?

MR. HUARTE: The Free Troup.

MR. EICHELBAUM: They have just gotten, by the way yesterday, their first city funding. They got $10,000.

MR. HUARTE: You know they were also funded by the California Arts Council last year and this year again to tour the State of California.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I think they are turning establishment now. They just got their first $10,000.

MR. HUARTE: Oh dear.

MR. BALLET: I am sure there are a couple of exceptions that are going their own way and are not terribly concerned about box office, but they, by and large, have to be small. I think it is pathetic. I would rather they be able to grow, too.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I think today the role of American theatre is to keep the spoken word alive. That would seem to me the most important role of the American theatre, because unfortunately the American playwright is being very much blocked and muffled by the terrible strictures of commercial theatre and the ghastly economics of the theatre. I think it must necessarily appeal to a more intelligent audience and has certainly for the last 50 years. It's certainly not the same audience in the past, not the same audience now because of television, not a mass media, but an important, very, very important one. It is extremely important, that of heritage of drama in this country. I think the problems it has in commercial is economic. The best of our playwrights have more or less gone into sort of a blocked situation because of the terrible pressures created in the commercial theatre for new works, for experimental works, and that's about it. I mean, I agree with what has been said earlier, and I don't see the point of repeating that.

The pressures that are put on new works, seen in the professional theatre are enough to discourage playwrights from writing for the professional commercial theatre. I hear this from so many playwrights. I am speaking particularly of the tragedy of certain playwrights, such as Tennessee Williams, certainly Arthur Miller, and to a certain extent Edward Albee. I think they simply aren't writing because of the fear of failure, and because of the enormous expense of putting on a play. They feel that it is just too risky for them to get into the situation and it becomes kind of a pressure cooker situation for them. They all brought it up to us as kind of an emotionally unsatisfactory situation, and most explosive situation or inflammatory situation, and they feel they don't want any part of it. And Lillian Hellman has not written a play for the last, what, 15 years, and I think that is a tragedy. The woman is still at the peak of her writing power and has not written for the theatre, and I think it is a known fact that Lillian Hellman, because of the awful experience of her last couple of plays, they were not commercially successful, and it had a terribly destructive effect on her and blocked her. But I think the role is to nurture playwrights and to bring out the best talent we have in this country, and I don't think they are really doing it as well as they should.

MR. HUARTE: Two things, you mentioned theatre today must appeal to a more intelligent audience.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I said it does, because it has kind of an elite audience. You mentioned that yourself. It is probably necessary -- it is not necessary, it is caused by the fact that it is expensive to go to the theatre. It has just never been a mass entertainment. I don't think it has been in any country, even in countries where you have heavy government subsidy. I don't think you consider theatre as a mass entertainment.

MR. HUARTE: I am told in other countries there is a lot more theatrical activity, good theatrical activity.

MR. EICHELBAUM: No doubt about it, there is more of it, but I think you find a lot more people going to the folk dance companies than to the productions of Shakespeare.

MR. HUARTE: The other question, if I may continue, was in reference to the last thing you said. What was it?

MR. EICHELBAUM. About playwrights being blocked?

MR. HUARTE: The playwrights, yes. Who is to blame? You were saying the playwrights are not able to continue their work because they can't stand the devastation of failure. Are their plays a failure simply because people will not pay to go see them or are they not good plays?

MR. EICHELBAUM: I think it is the system that blocks them. It is a terrible system. It is an awful, awful strain on them as human beings to go through the agony of putting on a play, and we have all read about that. I have never been through it myself, but they have all told us about ghastly experiences of preparing a play for the New York theatre, say, and then the waiting for the reviews and the fact that the New York Times did not like it and the fact that the play has to close because of the fact that the New York Times does not like it. That kind of thing must be an awful strain on some of our very talented people who are very sensitive human beings, and I think they need a better break. They need a better deal.

MR. BALLET: I agree with you, Stanley, but I think they are getting that. That is one thing I was going to say. I think there is an alternative system now that has developed here.

MR. EICHELBAUM: The resident theatres?

MR. BALLET: In part. One of the failures we have had -- this is current, we are still talking about what is the present situation of the theatres -- that if we compared our theatre in this country across the board professionally as, let's say, compared to England, whatever else you may say about it, an English playwright of almost any stature

anywhere along the ladder has many alternatives, places he can go to if he is not ready for the West End. He can go to Royal Court or this other theatre, or go off a few miles away and have it done. I think that has been why the English theatre has produced as many interesting playwrights, because they can go off and do it, take the chance, risk the failure without it being a disaster, you know, a three-quarters of a million dollars disaster. In this country, because we have always focused on New York and New York theatre, as it has become more and more expensive, it has become more and more prohibitive to take a chance on a play that deviates even a little bit from what the producer thinks is the norm.

However, I think there is light at the end of the tunnel; that is, we are beginning to see that a theatre such as the Taper here in Los Angeles will take a chance on a play which is a very different play. I am talking about the SHADOW BOX, which was a different play from what Gordon eventually took to --

MR. EICHELBAUM: New York?

MR. BALLET: No, he went somewhere else -- Arvin Brown's theatre. Long Wharf. There it became a different play. The director was able to see what he had done here wasn't quite right. He had taken two one-act plays and melded them together and he hadn't done it right, but it worked for him, he was good enough for Los Angeles -- I hate to say that -- it was good enough for an audience here and they enjoyed it. They weren't looking for a big hit. They went on to that.

Then finally it went into New York where it had an advance press and a lot of people talking about it, and there it had had tryouts, it had much better tryouts than the old Shubert system of taking a production and going with it. If we can encourage that in any way, it seems to me we will be helping the playwright to avoid that very kind of block, or be able to say, as Mr. Christopher might have, "I don't have a play." Quit, it is not that much loss, not in terms of money or in reputation at an earlier stage. I think you are right, Stanley. My hope is that there is a solution being made available to American playwrights that has been available to English playwrights.

MR. EICHELBAUM: There is some solution, there has been some solution in taking their plays to a lesser theatre, and taking their plays out of New York to --

MR. BALLET: I wouldn't say to a lesser major theatre. I don't think the Mark Taper is less than major.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Not maybe that, but there is also the problem in those theatres. Now, last year Tennessee Williams came to San Francisco with a play called THIS IS AN ENTERTAINMENT.

MR. BALLET: Question mark.

MR. EICHELBAUM: It wasn't much of an entertainment, but at least he had the opportunity to test this play at ACT, William Ball's company, but he came out immediately. With him was a New York producer who was all set, you see, to --

MR. BALLET: That didn't.

MR. EICHELBAUM: But didn't, but the pressure was there anyway. Not only was the pressure there, they spent a great deal of money on this production at ACT and it is very doubtful that Mr. Tennessee Williams will be back with another play and it is very doubtful that ACT will try another new play for a long time, because it was a terrible thing. So in a way it all boils down to the, you know, you know, I hate to say the word here, money.

MR. BALLET: No, it also boils down to taste. I'll be blunt about it, it was bad taste. The selection was bad, bad taste to pick that. It wasn't just money that failed. It wasn't a failure of money, they had the money to do the job.

MR. EICHELBAUM: There was the smell of it all over the production -- the producer, the New York producer was right there, his name was on the program, "Presented by ACT and" -- I don't remember the man's name, this particular person's name is well known. He was already there getting ready for Broadway.

MR. BALLET: At what point does a production like SHADOW BOX now become a commercial production? It goes into New York, it is a commercial production. However, there are lots of things. I mean, Gordon directs a play, doesn't he have one eye on the New York scene? And why not? Is there anything bad about that? I don't think there is. In fact, the only other thing I would add - I will shut up.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I would think any playwright has one eye on the New York scene.

MR. BALLET: Not every. Not every. I think that is changing. I hope it is changing a little bit. Remember, also, the commercial theatre for many, many years was paying almost all playwriting in America. All new playwriting was sustained in the commercial theatre. We can't ignore that, those very playwrights you just named.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Right. I admit that.

MR. BALLET: So let's not damn the commercial theatre. Are you listening to me, Shubert?

MR. EICHELBAUM: Well, even the Shubert is changing, they sent a lady around last year, Mrs. -- one of the board of directors, I forget her name -- to look at the very non-New York theatrical activities and to report back to them, because they have a foundation, and they give money out, which surprised me, I didn't know the Shubert Theatre did that.

MR. DonAROMA: The discussion that I walked in on seemed to relate to commercial theatre. Playwrights' drive to go into commercial theatre, which doesn't always necessarily direct itself towards New York and New York alone. That is what you are talking about, that is what I gathered from what you two gentlemen were discussing. I feel that there is an overtone in what the Shubert people are directing in that area at this time, that it is not just toward the New York market, looking that way, if I picked up what you were talking about when I walked in. It looks to me like both the Melandrez group and the Shubert group are looking otherwise than just at the audience, as far as the commercial venture is concerned. As you notice, Los Angeles has become heavier and heavier in the commercial field, as far as legitimate theatre is concerned. That is what I come in contact with.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Really remarkable.

MR. DonAROMA: Oh, yes, it appears to me in the next couple years you are going to see a doubling of theatre. They are starting to move into the old movie houses.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Pantages.

MR. DonAROMA: Not only the Pantages, the Fox Wilshire in Pomona now is opening. Beverly Theater at Beverly Hills. There is talk of another theatre down here in Los Angeles, another legit house is going to open up. One is opening in La Mirada, another one in Bell, and there are different movie chains talking about converting their 3,000 seta houses to legit houses within the County of Los Angeles.

MR. BALLET: I am curious, are they talking about commercial productions going in there?

MR. DonAROMA: Yes. Yes. Both. Not-for-profit and profit organizations. Both are talking. And the complex at Long Beach will be going into legitimate theatre, both of their legitimate theatres there. One along the line of the Mark Taper, and another along the line of the Pavilion. You are both familiar with the Mark Taper.

MR. BALLET: Yes.

MR. DonAROMA: You have got that complex at Long Beach that will be developing there.

MR. BALLET: 3,000 seat legitimate house?

MR. DonAROMA: Yes. Don't ask me where it is.

MR. BALLET: What are they going to do with it?

MR. DonAROMA: Legit.

MR. EICHELBAUM: It will have to be musicals.

MR. BALLET: It will have to be musicals. Can you imagine THE GLASS MENAGERIE in that?

I will now take the thing I am most interested in, obviously, the playwright. I say one of the things that should happen is that we should have some kind of a system, I would hope flexible, that provides the playwright with a living wage as soon as we recognize him as a playwright. I don't know how that is to be done. I think it can be done. It is done in other places. And that he get a living wage in connection with the theatre. I am at the point where I am almost ready to recommend one of the things we should think about is that any theatre receiving any kind of subsidy of any kind, that one of the stipulations be that it have attached to it a playwright. They have stagehands, they have managers, they have janitors, they have actors, they have directors, all of them are paid, and the playwright, who seems to me to be central, I agree with Stanley, the play has brought in jobs in almost all of them. He isn't central to it at all. So if you are going to get subsidies, you are going to have to have a playwright. I know that is a Draconian measure, but I would almost be -- almost be ready to suggest that.

It seems to me that we ought to have on a national level anything from 5 to 30 living wage awards every year to playwrights to be able to pursue in whatever way they want to their craft, and that would be guaranteed that their plays would be circulated to all the theatres that are receiving subsidies by the foundations and the endowments. We can't force theatres to do it, but at least if they would read it, they would consider it. I don't think that is asking too much of the American theatre.

MODERATOR: What would you assume to be a living wage?

MR. BALLET: For a playwright? A minimum of $20,000, just off the top of my head. We pay other people, lesser artists, that, and I think if he is a good playwright he gets $20,000 a year. That doesn't seem to me excessive at all. Maybe it does to everybody else. The reason I came up with that number, we both come from the world of academics, that's a pretty good associate professor's level, isn't it? That would mean that the playwright wouldn't have to do that awful thing of going in and teaching those classes that he hates to teach, but could devote himself to writing. I am just doing it purely on that basis. That is where I got the number.

MR. HUARTE: Could I ask a question? Does that mean another stipulation would be production of the plays, because the playwright writes plays, and he doesn't see it produced.

MR. BALLET: You can't force anybody to do a play, I mean unless we really become Stalinistic around here and say, "You do this play." What we can do, I think, is guarantee his plays will be circulated to the places receiving subsidies and will be considered.

MR. HUARTE: Everybody is always looking for plays, I mean, basically everybody says they are.

MR. BALLET: Everybody says they are. One of the problems is that most of the theatres do not know how to read new plays. That's another problem. I am trying to deal with the playwright's first problem there.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I do very much agree with Arthur that the greatest need in the American theatre is plays. I therefore feel the encouragement of playwrights should somehow be beefed up. It should just become more important in the funding of the theatre and it should take almost prime position, because in looking over the funds that have been made available to the theatre over the last few years, I think the playwrights have been very much left out. I agree a resident playwright should be attached to every theater company. That would be one way of encouraging the writing of plays by young people today. I do feel there is a great loss in not having that. The playwright is not having an easy time of it today.

Now, it is perfectly true that the theatre is in a very good period today. I think audiences are greater than over the last 20 years, ever since the television thing cut into the theatre business. But the depressing thing about the theatre today is the low caliber of work that is done, in terms of the work that is being presented. The pap that is being done. It is not much better than what people get on television. I think one of the roles of the theatre is to sort of elevate taste, which I don't think the theatre is doind today. I am speaking of the professional theatre, certainly the commercial theatre, and to some extent the non-profit theatre is doing it, too. Although in the San Francisco Bay area this summer there was a great big boom in summer theatre. All the colleges remained open or kept their theatres open and they had little sort of series of summer theatre called - at UC Berkeley they had "The Old Chestnut."

MR. BALLET: The Old Chestnut?

MR. EICHELBAUM: Old Chestnut theatre series. Old Chestnut summer theatre season, and the stuff they dragged up was just simply abominable, but people came to see them. Why did they do that? They knew that they could get audiences for it. Very frankly, a couple of professors told me they really found that there weren't any decent plays to be done, hadn't any been written lately, and they didn't want to do classical theatre, they wanted to do modern theatre, and that was it.

MR. HUARTE: I definitely agree with him. I think the playwright is crucial. I come from an experience of what one might call or what one can call ethnic bilingual community theatre in that we have a group that tour the country performing in Chicano, Mexicano barrios and neighborhoods, and I have discovered an interesting thing, that people are longing for theatre that relates to them, and you can do something that is unfortunately pap, as you say, and the audience is so enthusiastic

because they have not been represented by either the commercial theatre or not-for-profit theatre, and certainly not by the media in anything closely approximating their real condition in the society, and I don't mean it has to be political, either. But the theatre that is going to represent that sector of society finds an audience that is very, very excited and exciting to behold. So they accept, you know, a lot of stuff that is not Chicano, Mexicano, or pap in the theatre. But they are learning, and they are becoming much more critical, as I think all of our audiences will and should. As you say, we have to raise the level of the TV. What is it they say, television is aimed at the 12-year-old mentality, and I watch it, and I think it is 8-years-old. I just can't believe what they are doing with the minorities, certainly. So I feel the theatre should not only relate to the minorities -- I think one of the disgraces of the Chicano theatre is that it doesn't reach enough of the non-Chicano audience, you see, because non-Chicano is not going to go to a Chicano theatre.

As I think Black theatre has been exposed to a wider audience, because it has become commercial. You do a Black HELLO, DOLLY, that's not like theatre. At least I said long ago we are not going to do a Chicano version of HELLO, DOLLY, since the Blacks did it. So I see an exciting thing happening in the community, and what we lack is really good theatre in that community, theatre that is made available. My biggest argument is the commercial theatre is not available to everybody. I don't believe one can train an audience vicariously. They have to be exposed to it. My wife stopped going to plays because we see so much bad theatre. I can't drag her to a play anymore. Because it is just so infrequent that we see something that is any good.

In any sector, whether it is commercial theatre or Black, White, Brown or Chicano theatre it is difficult to find good productions, so this goes to the next one. My point is training. There is something lacking. I am part of a theatre training institute, and there is something very, very lacking in the training, or let us say the identifying of talent. I know nothing of the High School for Performing Arts that did CHORUS LINE in New York. I think this is an incredible advantage that New York has. They apparently have this special high school in New York --

MR. EICHELBAUM: It is a public high school.

MR. HUARTE: -- and it is a public school. At an early age these highly talented people are identified -- sounds so Russian -- but they are identified and they are, you know, allowed to go into this thing. I have taught at all levels, and I know even at grammar school level you can find children who are certainly destined for some sort of above and beyond the average talent.

MR. EICHELBAUM: You know, that is a whole different problem though a very important one. Is the next question, the training of talent? One of the most terrible things in my line of work, in reviewing,

is having to sit through those gosh awful performances that I have to, so that if you do get a decent play, it is so badly done, you know--

MR. HUARTE: You don't know it is a good play.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I think I am saying exactly what Jorge said about an institute. I am amazed there is no National Theatre Institute for training of talent.

MR. HUARTE: I think one of the disgraces of this society, when we call ourselves an educated literate society, when in high school we are graduating students who cannot read and write. Furthermore, who cannot identify what talent -- they are not allowed to develop their talents. You know, everybody keeps throwing it back to one grade below; they can't read because the third grade teacher didn't teach them how to, and we all heave a sigh of relief. It is not my fault, it was the Kindergarten teacher. It is not true. We have no real support at that level, at the kinder-secondary level of the arts. We build football stadiums left and right, but we don't build theatres, and I think that those formative years are crucial in the training of a good theatre student. I think you may find in your students who have had an active participation in drama in high school are far ahead of those who come to the university or the college and then discover they have something, some kind of an interest in theatre, and begin to pursue it. They are behind, just as a piano player is not expected at age 15 or 16 to become a concert pianist. Who is to say that somebody can arrive at the university as a freshman and say I want to be a great actor on the training that he can get.

The society doesn't recognize the importance of theatre as they do the importance of the World Series. You don't have a world theatre, either.

MR. BALLET: Would you extend that to the talent not just in the theatre, but the talent of people going to the theatre, so that whole system has to start a lot earlier than it is now started. Minnesota, if I may just continue, Minnesota has always given us a good example why they have so much theatre in Minneapolis or Minnesota. Why is it? Well, the reason is that the high schools there are very, very good at it. Some of them have magnificent auditoriums and do a big program of very, very good theatre, and then that goes on one hopes at the college level as well. But that is where the audiences are also being built, not just the talent that appears on stage. Remember the theatre is a tacit agreement between the people on the stage and the people in the auditorium that they are going to have a theatre.

MR. HUARTE: Definitely, definitely. But so often you have retired English teachers teaching drama, you know, at the high school level, and they find them in some closet and bring them out on a stage to teach drama.

MR. BALLET: Do the class play.

MR. HUARTE: It is a terrible thing for everybody.

MR. BALLET: Can I get one lick in, please? Can I defend a little bit of pap, small letters. I have never tried to defend Papp.

MR. HUARTE: Depends on how you want to do it.

MR. BALLET: It was interesting --

MR. EICHELBAUM: Pap meaning drivel?

MR. BALLET: Even drivel. The history of the arts that we are talking about, the history in this country, almost every ethnic group coming in and creating a kind of drivel theatre, the most famous one, I suppose, the people who came out of the Yiddish art theatre, had exactly the same problem, but look at those plays. They are awful. Awful. But out of that grew some fine artists, and some of the fine artists that contributed to the American theatre. What I am saying, I am not really as worried about the pap at the ethnic level, such as the Chicano theatre, melodramatic, and whatever, that the audience feels a need for theatre, and that those people in that theatre that are performing are being trained for it. That is much more important. They can grow in the mainstream or not, as they will. I wanted to defend that, because we all damn it somehow or other just because it's drivel, it is necessarily awful. It is awful, but may lead to something.

MR. EICHELBAUM: By that so can you continue to defend daytime television for what it does in the society.

MR. BALLET: It keeps a lot of actors employed, and I am for it, and it is a lot better, frankly, than a lot of nighttime television, and a lot of nighttime theatre -- I will even say that, it having slipped out, but it is better.

MR. HUARTE: Yes. I didn't say that Chicano theatre is drivel or pap or anything. There have been stages of development, you know, certainly in any theatre.

MR. DonAROMA: Speaking of the playwright, as far as my end of the business, a playwright is the roots of theatre. Now, we handle the end product, whether the product be from the worls of a playwright, writer or rock group in a theatre, or television show in a theatre, which we have combination of all three. You will find at the Huntington Hartford there will be dramatic, a small musical, a rock group or television show we have in there playing now. Same way with the Greek Theatre; same way with the theatres downtown. They have the Philharmonic in the morning, rock group in the afternoon, and Neil Simon play at night.

What is happening that I have noticed, as I said before, that we are handling the end product of the playwright's work, the director's work, the lighting director's work, all combined and it is brought in and put on

the stage. Prior to it coming there, the theater arts that are taught in the colleges, both in front of the lights and behind the curtain, as the expression goes, and behind the curtain, this is not taught in the colleges. It's fumbled through. You talk of the lack of reading ability, the professionals in the colleges, in the schools are not professional enough to teach what should be when they walk into the professional theatre. The dramatic arts that are taught in colleges, like for example, we sent our apprentices down to, I believe, UCLA or one of the colleges here in town for them to get some basic training to assist us in our field of referring people out to the different phases of the entertainment industry, which is television, legitimate theatre and motion picture houses, which all will handle over 2,000 people, and we found by sending our apprentices down there, the instructor down there was happy that we picked their college, because he learned quite a bit from them, from the men who went down there for training. In other words, our apprentices were far more advanced than what they were teaching in college to the kids going through school to learn theatre arts, learn the handling of backstage, such as the Eisenauer boards, sound equipment mixing, the flies, operating and setting and striking up the scenery, taking cues, whether light cues or sound cues or music cues, or whatever; and they found that the experience of the apprentice that went in there had more experience than the theatrical instructor.

And getting to what you were mentioning about the playwrights, I feel the playwright is the root of the theatre, because from him comes the starting of the building of that product. I agree with the $20,000.

MR. BALLET: Too much?

MR. DonAROMA: No.

MR. BALLET: Not enough? I don't know.

MR. DonAROMA: How? Making $20,000 a year in the theatre is what?

MR. BALLET: If you were making $20,000 a year in the theatre, that would be one thing, but he isn't making anything in the theatre is my assumption.

MR. DonAROMA: Look, he is putting life in it.

MR. BALLET: I am not against his getting more. I thought I was being extravagant.

MR. DonAROMA: No.

MR. EICHELBAUM: If it would be more then I would be very happy to be a playwright.

MR. BALLET: Can you write a play?

MR. EICHELBAUM: I could try.

MR. HUARTE: This is one of the things that we in theater at all levels suffer under, and I think particularly the artists. We'll take anything. We'll take anything.

MR. EICHELBAUM: That is what we had in mind.

MR. HUARTE: When he said $20,000, I thought great, I was thinking ten. Guggenheim gives you $10,000.

MR. BALLET: And the people are grateful for it.

MR. HUARTE: It certainly should be something so you can live decently. We should all be monks at that rate.

MR. DonAROMA: Because our people get paid on the chicken laying that egg. If there is no chicken, there's no egg.

MR. BALLET: Could I ask you a question directly about that? One of the other things, Pat, that I worried about for many years now is that we are the only industry, let's pretend it's all an industry for profit and not for profit.

MR. DonAROMA: It is an industry.

MR. BALLET: It is an industry.

MR. DonAROMA: Better believe that.

MR. BALLET: It goes all the way from the big time, the really big time out here, particularly, to a little storefront theater. They're all professionals. It is one industry. It's the only industry in which the research and development end of it is not supported by the commercial end of it, and I find the Shubert dribble, not drivel, just a penny compared to the millions that were made. I find it outrageous that these monolithic corporations control these studios and, not that they don't pay the stars the money they pay, that is fine, that's their business, the star is worth it, I assume, but they will not put out money for the research and development of their own industry, which is what we are doing. Am I getting ahead of the game?

MR. BALLET: I am saying what we should have is a relationship whereby those monoliths, and that is exactly what they are, realize where the experiments are coming from that they are going to be using in five years from now, and they are coming from there, and they have to support that directly is what I would suggest.

You see, we, Jorge and I sit here thinking, "My God, $20,000 is a lot of money." For a playwright who will 20 years from now, perhaps 10 from now be making $150,000 or $]50,000? Right now he needs $20,000 and would be thrilled by it. They are thrilled by

Guggenheim, and it is $10,000 or $2,500 with Rockefeller.

They should be just supporting, for example, the little troupe exploring ways of acting. There are little troupes exploring brand-new methods of getting about characterizations. The Provisional was one of them.

MR. EICHELBAUM: This is all very idealistic. One of the things about the little groups is that they become kind of a welfare theater, in a sense, a lot of little group troupes are just out to get grants and they have got one person doing those experimental, little exercises with them, and they are living off the $10,000 they get from the National Endowment.

MR. BALLET: I doubt that.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Because a lot of that is fraudulent, too. I think also there should be some means of checking whether the people are talented.

MR. BALLET: My God, I am on the road every weekend. I know we check. I know we are checking, and it is verified and questioned. I challenge Stanley to tell me of a little group that consists of one person getting $10,000 a year and living off of it.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I went to one in San Francisco.

MR. BALLET: Name?

MR. EICHELBAUM: I forget the name. It was at the Mission Neighborhood Center, and it was a play, it was a man and his wife, and the man was a professor at one of the -- or an instructor at one of the local colleges, and he wrote a play about this Chicano woman who was executed in California, and he got $10,000 through the National Endowment, and he got a lot of kids in off the street to perform, and he sent out a leader saying that he got a $10,000 grant, and he wanted the play reviewed. And I went, and I was the only person in the audience.

MR. BALLET: I don't know what that was. That certainly wasn't the theater program.

MR. EICHELBAUM: It was a worthless play. The only thing I thought about it, well, maybe that money was well spent, at least keeping the kids off the street.

I was being specific because what we are saying is there should be subsidy for little acting troupes, and I think there you get into a sort of dangerous area. You have to make artistic judgments all along the way. Not everybody who says he is a playwright should get $20,000.

MR. BALLET: There are always dangerous areas.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Because the National Endowment is in Washington, they often give out grants to the wrong people and some of the most talented aren't really getting it.

MR. BALLET: Let's not get off into what the Endowment does and does not do. To go back to the other one, I am simply saying one of the ideals, and it may be idealistic, would be that the industry itself be supportive, leave all foundations and all endowments out of the picture for the moment, that the industry itself be supporting the creative efforts on the part of the art itself, and there are, of course, artistic judgments that have to be made.

MR. DonAROMA: Our union as a whole are tremendously interested in support of the different talents on the way up the ladder to the end product, whether it be in a college, in high school teaching. Again, we have children's theater that we try to encourage, and our method of encouragement is, as far as children's theater is concerned, we allow, different conditions within your contract, to encourage children's theater. We have members of our locals that sit on committees to encourage the interest in children's theater, whether it be dramatic or musical, or whatever, to encourage the youth of today to direct themselves towards the line of the playwright, the director, or whatever, within the industry. You have to use it as a word "industry." We try to encourage the children of today in the different phases of schooling to become interested in the theater, not that we separate dramatic or musical, or whatever, but as a whole entity. Today, you will find in the kids of today a rock group, that's it. In small theaters, and children's theater, we have a little theater contract that we liken to what we would consider a one-man house as opposed to the three man full crew.

MR. BALLET: Just out of curiosity, may I ask a question? It doesn't have anything to do with what we are discussing. What is a one-man house here in town?

MR. DonAROMA: The Westlake Theater is a one-man house. Anything under 400 seats is certainly a one-man house. We negotiate whether or not they work that way.

MR. HUARTE: May I ask a question, Pat?

MR. DonAROMA: Yes.

MR. HUARTE: You mentioned earlier about the lack of training in terms of the colleges, and what have you. I have been in several colleges where I feel that people are getting good training, but they cannot get into the union. Who do you take into the union. Everybody always says you cannot get into IATSE, you know, people break legs trying to get into the union, I'm told.

MR. DonAROMA: That is not true. I will tell you why I say this. We have people come to us from a college, Long Beach especially, Pasadena Playhouse, where they work both as a performer, where they work on front lights, work on switchboards, they get that experience. They come to our local in a semi-professional state. Then they start to work out of our local and then they realize the difference between what the college and professional is. There is a lot of difference between the two of them.

MR. HUARTE: When they come to you, do they become apprentices?

MR. DonAROMA: No, they become apprentices after they have worked out of our local for a period of 18 months. During that 18 months' time they work legitimate theater today, television tomorrow, motion picture house the next day, back intotelevision the following day. They get the many different phases of industry, and it can be grip work, can be property work, can be electrical, and they they learn how to make up a switchboard, how to install sound in the house, from beginning to end, with a complete circuit of sound. How to build a set, also the reading of a blueprint, read the blueprint, build the set, put it together, erect it, set it, strike it, on cue. They have to learn all of those phases of the business.

A member of the union is a person that comes to our local, for example, fills out an application, and they establish what their qualifications are. Then our local picks up a need, because the referrals rise and fall with each day in this business, as we all know. This month it may be going like hell. Next month, nothing. The following month it happens again, or may run a full week or might run for three months, you never know. And we will open the applications to get people that will come in, they will fill out an application and write down what their qualifications are. We go over each one of them and check what the qualifications are. Naturally the one with most basic qualifications is the one we put to work, and then they start. They work out of the local for a period of time, until they become experienced, and then they can either go into an apprenticeship program or go right in as a journeyman after years of training.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I was curious, you spoke earlier about a very healthy statistical report that would show what a healthy state the professional theater is in, but now I am just sort of curious; it's true, there have been figures shown in Variety of the profits on the record of the box office, and all of that, but don't they just sort of represent just a few hits? Isn't there more being lost in the theater today?

MR. ANDERSON: For the commercial theater, Variety reports those on Broadway, more is being made than lost. If you owned the whole portfolio of shows today, you would be making money. If you look at the Ford data covering 30 major non-profit theaters over the period of '55 up through '73, and then more recent data gathered by the Theater Communications Group in its annual fiscal survey, you

see a picture of finanancial stability. You don't see earnings gaps tending to grow without bounds. You see evidence that the people running the theaters are doing a very fine job, an improving job of financial planning and operating and environment. You don't see large deficits, for example, accumulating. People are keeping total income and expenses within pretty good balance. You see lots more performances, you see bigger audiences, bigger subscription bases. I am not exactly certain whether it is accurate to say it is a picture of health but there are not a lot of the kinds of wild gyrations, and what have you, showing up in these figures that suggest there is a scraping and accomodating act going on.

MR. ROSS: There is a thing that I would like to speak to about this. I think that is perfectly true, if you look at statistical questions, but there is a kind of underbelly to this which is not quite so happy, and I think I speak in relation to the people that in fact really make the thing work, which is the actor. The acting profession, and therefore the whole of regional theater, I think speaking purely from my own point of view, actors do not or cannot, it seems to me, make a respectable American standard of living by working in the regional theater, and that in fact I as an artistic director-producer in a way am being subsidized by Madison Avenue. I, in fact, do make accommodations insofar as I will sometimes put a play, as I have done this year, as far along in my schedule to March, because the actors I need to do that play are more likely to be disencumbered from commercials and the TV specials and pilots in March than they are in December. This question of making accommodations for the middle range of actors, the actors who have been established in the theater for 15, 20 years, the men and women on which the theater depends, at least my theater depends, to have a specific standard of expertise and professionalism, I'm not talking about stars, is something that you really have to grapple with. I think our theater pays as good a level of salaries as any anywhere in the country. Nevertheless, I have not increased the top salary for my actors in six years.

MR. EICHELBAUM: What is the top?

MR. ROSS: My theater is $500. In order to get $500 you have got to have a name. If you are appearing in a TV series, you will not necessarily get $500. You are going to be somebody who will in fact get on the marquee if it was in New York.

MR. DonAROMA: $500 per week?

MR. ROSS: Yes, it includes both rehearsal and performance, of course, but that figure has remained at that position for six years.

MR. EICHELBAUM: How many people do you pay that to for one production?

MR. ROSS: Well, one, and I don't say every production.

Sometimes, if it is a small show, I have enough money to pay two people, but I suppose in the whole six plays in a year I won't pay it more than three times or four times.

MR. DonAROMA: You are talking about an eight-performance week?

MR. EICHELBAUM: This is the Seattle Repertory Company?

MR. ROSS: Right.

MODERATOR: Is a good current wage, not a living wage, now being paid for these kinds of people you are talking about in the range of $300, $350?

MR. ROSS: Right. That is just for an engagement, not a year. I can give you an example of a man who, I think, is an outstanding actor. He is a man who was always going to be a character actor, even when he was young, though he had the build up of being a juvenile, or something, but I think he is an outstanding actor. He has worked for me two or three times, and I am prepared to give him major leads now, in addition to which he has gained accolades at other regional theaters as one of the outstanding performers of the year. He mentioned in passing that he was wondering whether he would be able to get into the new complex over on Ninth or Tenth Avenue, the new high rise, because he was now making about $13,000 a year.

Most theaters of the world have admitted one way or another that the actors and authors do in fact subsidize, I mean the famous phrase which is that you sell to the movies what you buy from the theater, and so there is a general admittance everywhere that actors have tended to subsidize the theater, because they are able then to make money from the stardom, or whatever, they get elsewhere.

I don't really work on the basis of a core company. I work on the basis of what you would call jobbing, but I think essentially what I do is casting the play to the best possible availability and, where possible, then asking the actor if he would be interested in appearing in more than one play, because if he appears in consecutive plays, then this automatically makes it more economical for me.

I find that the actors that we are talking about are most loathe to enter into such an agreement. He will do one play, the part of which attracts him. He is really coming for the art. He is really coming because he wants to play UNCLE VANYA, or whatever, and he is going to make probably some considerable sacrifices to do so. So the question of what is an equitable wage, I'd rather put it this way that I have talked with actors who are now, interestingly enough, enormous numbers of them are now based in this city (Los Angeles) where they used to be in New York. I now find that I have to set up casting interviews here, because everybody who has done more than five years' work is now apparently migrating to Los Angeles. They shift back and forth, but nevertheless, they are here.

And I raised this question with established actors, people who make

commercials, and so on, and I said, "What would I have to pay you, something like $2,000 a week before I was really competitive with the possibilities that you are getting in Los Angeles so that you don't have to go and beat your agent over the head to come and do this job?

I have had situations where an actor coming to me and developed as an actor, got to New York, called me wanting to do a leading part in a Chekhov play, and then being told by the agent who just got him a TRAC II commercial, "What the hell do you think you are doing going to Seattle? Are you serious about commercials or aren't you?" And then turning me down. So I would say that what I would like to be able to do is offer, continue to operate as I do, but offer $2,000 a week to an actor, say, established 15, 20 years. Even that I don't think would be outlandish, if he came to me for one play, he'd make $16,000. You might not do more than two or three a year, might do two plays in a year.

I would put it at $2,000 a week for certain roles, maybe eight roles in a year, but I would want to bank on the $2,000. The problem, if I may say, that would arise from that is how do you then maintain everybody else from the minimum up? Everybody then starts to want to push.

MR. DonAROMA: Are you talking about eight performances or less a week?

MR. ROSS: Yes.

MR. DonAROMA: Eight performances as eight performances a week type of thing, $2,000 is not an outrageous amount. The thing is he is now tied up.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I read today in Time the public is supporting $15,000 per evening, and people like Leontyne Price and Beverly Sills get $15,000 per evening, so what's wrong with $2,000?

MR. ROSS: We have had Beverly Sills come to the Seattle Opera. She's penciled in many years in advance, and my patrons say, why can't we know who we are going to see in 1979? I say, "The simple reason is that I don't have $15,000."

MR. DonAROMA: $15,000 a week.

MR. ROSS: A night.

MR. DonAROMA: A night.

MR. ROSS: What I am really talking about is to be able to have the resources to be able to pay that kind of figure so that when I go to the agent, I'm not caught like with a begging bowl, because he immediately puts me down. I get this every time I call the agent. "He can't possibly live on this, and how are you yackety yackety yackety," and unless you know the buy or the gal personally, you won't get any response because the agent will never communicate.

MR. BALLET: Whatever that is. That's one thing. They think actors get paid that.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Of course they do.

MR. BALLET: Where in our end of that -- I started off by saying it is all one big industry with various constituencies. The actors are indeed so badly underpaid -- so is everybody else for that matter, it isn't just the actors or the playwright or directors, all of us. That's one. And the other is there is a funny discrepancy, we were talking about at lunch, and that is in the public mind no one would assume that they can play the cello like Rostopovitch can; however, everybody talks, everybody gestures --

MR. HUARTE: So everybody can act.

MR. BALLET: -- everybody walks and breathes.

MR. HUARTE: That's right.

MR. BALLET: That's right, don't bump into the furniture, that's about all it is. Remembering those lines might be kind of hard, but I have got a good memory. I can do that.

What I am getting at is, and I know it is very simplistic, I think we are talking about a very specific constituency that we are addressing this to, and I think what ought to be borne in mind is that there is an enormous amount of training, and it should be involved, and that that training should be rewarded, as it is anywhere else. It is worth $15,000. I wouldn't diminish that. But I would like also to see the other artists who have put in just as many years and just as much heart, just as much soul be paid equivalent to what they do in the theater, as what they do in the living theater as what they do in other branches of that same industry. Is that a fair enough way of putting it?

MR. ROSS: Yes. I mean, when you think that when Peter Hall built what some people considered to be the greatest ensemble of the English-speaking world, when he did that Stratford thing, and all, and he created the situation where he had 80 or 90 people who were considered to be associates, for which you got a hundred pounds a week. You then went off and made your movie or television, but you were on retainer to that organization, and so that is a problem. The cost of this problem, because of the fact that we are dealing in American theater with a constant and not a conscience, even though you dome down here in two hours from Seattle, it is still not quite the same as taking a train from London to Bristol for two hours.

MR. BALLET: Or to the studio.

MR. ROSS: Or to the studio. It is not even the same as being able to make a movie in Spain in the daytime and getting back to play MACBETH at the Stratford in the evening. It should be, but somehow it isn't. And we do have the situation at the moment whereby the studios, or the electronics industry or aspect of our industry where all people are essentially getting

their basic bread and butter is a long way away from where the stations are, and that is a real, is a very real problem, and is something we have to grapple with.

MODERATOR: Are ticket prices too high for people to go to the theater?

MR. HUARTE: Yes.

MR. ROSS: In your area?

MR. HUARTE: Yes.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Agreed.

MR. ROSS: In our situation that is not the case, ticket prices only. Only that we practice, and we have just been talking to my board about this, is that the money that they come up with as a ball to fill part of our income gap, as I said, it must not be regarded as a fact that management can't pay its way, that in fact what it is doing is really doing exactly the same as when you give money to the Orthopedic Hospital for the children. What you do is permit us to keep our top at $7.50.

MR. HUARTE: What is your bottom?

MR. ROSS: $3.00, that's for a student ticket.

MR. HUARTE: Most theaters don't have that low figure.

MR. ROSS: We have 900 seats.

MR. HUARTE: I have said earlier it was possibly very high, it was a prohibitive cost to go to the theater. Generally, aren't theaters higher than $3.00, certainly commercial theaters?

MR. ROSS: Commercial theater, yes, undoubtedly. I don't know what the regional theaters, non-profit distributing theater is in America. I don't know what their tops and their bottoms are.

MR. HUARTE: The Guthrie is $8.00?

MR. BALLET: No, the bottom is $5.00. Then they have student rush, and it gets down to $3.00, if there are seats available.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Now, ACT is up to $10. I am amazed keeping it down to $7.50. I don't understand how you do that, and still pay $500 a week for one. actor.

MR. ROSS: Our income gap is about somewhere around 35 percent, in other words, we make about 65 percent of our budget, and so forth.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I am surprised.

MR. DonAROMA: Let me say this, from the layman's point of view, laymen are not aware of what the total cost of, say, your type of operation, right from the rental of lighting fixtures, building scenery, the employment of the art director, the employment of a shop prior to going to the theater. Before you get to the theater at all with your production, before the director walks into the theater, there has been the draftsman paid that drafts your blueprints, there has to be a shop that builds your set negotiated with.

MR. ROSS: Right.

MR. DonAROMA: There has to be rental of the lights, sound company involved for the sound involved in the theater, then the employment of the stagehands, wardrobe, makeup, and all those before you get into the theater at all. Now, when you get into your theater, you are now getting into your theater with the various crafts that are involved, you are talking money, a lot of money or you have no theater.

Now, when you go into your theater, you are bringing in your rehearsal time, which is part of the performance, and the whole thing, that whole package as opposed to ticket income has to balance this way, and if it doesn't, you are in trouble. Am I right or wrong?

MR. ROSS: Yes.

MR. DonAROMA: Not counting the rental on the house.

MR. ROSS: We have certain advantages. In the first place, we operate in a house which is owned by a municipality. We pay a rent there for it, but nevertheless it means, when we come to the end of our season, we do not have problems of maintaining the building longer than, you know, when we finish our season we take the key, give it back to the mayor, metaphorically say, "Thank you, we'll be back in the fall." And I am very gratified to say that the citizens of Seattle just voted to build a new one, $4,900,000, to build a theater which will be done to the specifications that we feel we need as a town. At the moment our operating structure is very difficult insofar as we operate in a house that has no support facilities for producing. In other words, our administrative offices are somewhere else, pur rehearsal space is somewhere else, our shops are somewhere else, and so on and so on. We have made a big appeal this last month and the citizens of Seattle said, "Yes, we'll set you up." Of course, it will still be the citizens' property, and we will still pay rental, but this is an advantage we are happy that we have.

But then we consider the function of our whole operation as a service operation as distinct from finally showing a profit, we are in fact showing a service, when we have nearly as many as 25,000 subscribers, which we will have this year in a city like a million something in its environs, with 750,000 in the city itself. That's a very high percentage per capita. Therefore, we consider it to be a very important service in exactly the same way as the symphony, and so on. Therefore we have in addition to our box office, and of course from the National Endowment who has been most generous, we have monies from the municipality in the form of services. They

are not permitted to give us a direct grant, but they do, in fact, buy performances which are distributed free to the citizens, and for which they pay us a price. We also have a contract with the State. Then the Corporate Council for the Arts, which is a special organization devoted entirely to a kind of like a United Way for the corporations in the city, have addressed themselves recently and come up with a goal to establish what they were going to do recently, and we will get something like $60,000 a year, and then of course with our own board, a goal of $150,000. So that is how we come up with a million and a half.

We cannot really claim all the credit for theater being accepted as an important aspect of life in Seattle, because I came to the city before that theater was founded as a visiting fireman to the university, and I felt at the time that it was a very fine theater city, although it had very little theater apart from the colleges, but the colleges had in fact done a great deal of work in founding a desire for theater. The interesting thing about the Seattle Repertory is that it was, in fact, founded by the burghers. After the fair there was the building, and the citizens' committee came together and said, "We will have a theater." All of us know that is really not the usual way theaters happen in America. They usually happen as a consequence of an individual with vision, you know, like Reinhardt or Selzer or whatnot, going ahead and finally bringing a community to recognize that it needs theater. In Seattle, in fact, it was the other way around. That is somewhat of an anomaly, I think, in the general picture.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Tell me, did you have public support from the start?

MR. ROSS: Yes.

MR. EICHELBAUM: You mean it was not a slow, painful process to be born?

MR. ROSS: I wasn't the first artistic director. I remember quite clearly there was something like 7,500 subscriptions subscribed before they even had an artistic director.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Fantastic.

MR. ROSS: It is certainly a good town in that way, but nevertheless, although it still has a certain momentum because of its history, we find it is kind of typical of where we are across the country now. I think of the different way Minneapolis came into being as compared with Seattle have evened out, but there are many comparable factors to what is going on in Minneapolis and the future evolution in Minneapolis and future evolution of Seattle.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Is it also true, in Seattle, I imagine there is very little professional theater beyond what you are doing:

MR. ROSS: No, as a matter of fact, as a consequence of the founding of the Repertory, which has become regarded as the establishment

theater, although in fact our cross section of the theater if you have got 25,000 people out of a city of 750,000 you are not really dealing with, you know, the upper crust. It's just a pretty big elite. But as a consequence of a reaction against that, we now have two other Equity theaters and about three or four kind of underground.

We know that an underground exists because of having seen people go to the TCG national audition, and then having noted that they have talent, and kind of disappeared from view, and then about three or four years later they surface in Louisville or Cincinnati or somewhere. They have been doing something in between, and when you get their resume, it shows that they have been doing all of this kind of underground stuff.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Talent. They need talent.

MR. ROSS: Oh, yes.

MR. BALLET: Yes, they need talent. That is what really it gets to, there is a danger that we play the numbers game. We think that quantity is the equivalent of quality, and obviously it isn't. Just because a city has a lot of theater doesn't mean it has a lot of good theater, it means it has a lot of crappy theater in certain cities. The main thing it has a lot of, it is crap.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I mentioned the number of theaters in the Bay area 87, true, but I am horrified. I am horrified by that number, because, you know, anybody with any brain would know that only 10 of them are any good, and that is a high number. What disturbs me, it was brought up earlier, and you said I should hold off on this, I might as well bring it up now, they are all in competition with each other for public funds. That is to me very upsetting. To me only the 10 good ones should get the subsidy, because they deserve it, and the public funds should not be dissipated the way it often is and go to groups that just simply set themselves up as theater groups. They find a little storefront and they build a little platform stage, and then they come out with $10,000 of public money that doesn't go to an Equity or let's call it a professional non-profit theater, you see.

MR. BALLET: Let me just say one thing. I don't think any National Endowment Theater money is going to that kind of theater. First of all, it has to have been in business for two years and have a record, before it can possibly get it.

I don't know what Expansion Arts does. They are another fund that is part of the National Endowment, Expansion Arts. I don't know if they can do that or what they do with their money.

MR. ROSS: Unless it has a phone in and they are doing all kinds of things.

MR. BALLET: In principle I still agree with you, Stanley. All I would add is that a question of quality again has to be made, and that is

where I assume the word "professional" comes in. That is one of the keys, is we assume people are earning a living doing this or are trying to earn a living out of it, are giving their lives to this business, in a sense are quite different from those people who are in the educational process, not in a lesser degree, but in a different process, but different level, and I think there is a distinction that always has to be made. On the other hand, I would not want to cut off all of that activity totally, because sometimes out of that, remember that's where all of us came from, we all came from there.

MR. HUARTE: I don't think we should say that there are so many of these groups, because the National Endowment has this huge budgetary requirement, and to apply for a sizable amount of money, what is $10,000 for a theater company? Nothing. In order to qualify for the National Endowment, what is it, $250,000 a year budget? Well, no little storefront theater is going to have that. I disagree that it should go to the Equity people instead.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I'm sorry --

MR. HUARTE: They are training grounds. If you look at the number of froups that applied, for example, in California this last year to the current California Arts Council tour, there were about 45 groups, they funded at most 12. The first year they funded six -- five, and we had about 25 applicants, and this last year had 45, many of them were not worth it, of course, but there was an advisory panel appointed by the California Arts Council to try to evaluate the groups. But we know some of the groups that got funded this year are not really worth funding, but the funding isn't that great. It's enough money to fund an Equity salary for six weeks. That is not enough to keep people alive all year long. But some of these groups divide the funds throughout the year, you know, they just spread it out, in other words, they don't need whatever the Equity minimum is to live, because so many of them are collectives, and they are what you call underground theater companies. So I think it is important to fund those groups, and we don't really fund enough of them.

MR. EICHELBAUM: What I wanted to say -- that was a slip of the tongue to say that it should go to the Equity groups. I don't know why I said that, I meant to go to, worthy groups.

MR. HUARTE: Worthy, certainly.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I felt there should be a better system of deciding this quality.

MR. HUARTE: One of the problems, and I don't know if the National Endowment has the same -- yes, the National Endowment probably has the same, worse probably, because they are at the national level, but in California I was on the first committee to select groups for the California Arts Council tour. There were three of us -- well, two staff members, and there were these 25 applying groups, of which I had not -- none of us had seen more than four of these. The California Arts Council should have funded us through the year to have gone and evaluated them. They did

the same thing last year, appointed a panel of which nobody had seen all of these groups. It was really impossible in order to get funded to travel, at least tour the state. Can you imagine on a national level how they are going to know? So what happens, the better known groups, the groups that are physically and financially capable of getting out of their own communities will be the ones that are going to be funded.

You have groups hidden away in certain communities that nobody will ever see, consequently they were never funded.

MR. BALLET: May I add a dimension to that. I agree with you. There is another dimension, you stated the money goes from good theaters to bad theaters. Also bad theater, I think, generates audiences that are repelled by the theater. To me it is just as important as the money they are taking away. In other words, I have been in almost every city, I think every city in the United States. Invariably a theater, if I were named czar, I would close it. It should be closed, one of the reasons it is draining money. It has a board of directors and it is stirring up all kinds of activities, and they are taking money, but I would close them simply because they were doing bad theater.

MR. ROSS: In many cases they have been very successful.

MR. BALLET: Very successful in doing bad theater.

MR. ROSS: There is a discretionary law for that kind of work.

MR. BALLET: That's it, I knew there was a law

MODERATOR: Should all expenditures of public funds to theaters be based on first-hand knowledge by somebody on the panel?

MR. HUARTE: Certainly. Otherwise it becomes a sort of "I heard of that group," and so-and-so has heard of that particular group that's applying. Only the better known groups are sometimes not the better groups.

MR. BALLET: Agreed, I would second it.

MR. HUARTE: We have a graduate student who was an intern for the National Endowment in Washington last summer who learned all kinds of incredible things. One of which is if you don't know anybody on the endowment panel, they won't even look at your proposal, according to what this student said.

MR. BALLET: Oh, no.

MR. HUARTE: Oh, maybe they will look at them. They look at them.

MR. BALLET: If that is in the Expansion Arts, we don't know. They are a different category. I say simply that the Endowment is a very large body and there are various funding agencies within the Endowment,

including Expansion Arts, which I don't think anybody in this room has anything ever to do with, if I'm not mistaken, whereas the theater panel, Bob is the former chairman of it, you have been on it, I am on it, and you are the former chairman. I do think that there is a scrupulous, if I may say, wearing and exhausting going through every single application. Where there is a question, and we know that nobody has seen it, it is tabled, by God, until somebody sees it. Usually me at this point. That I think I would defend. I have heard that accusation, but I really do defend the Endowment. Maybe the choices aren't always wise.

MR. HUARTE: You know, I was referring to the Expansion Arts, but again I cannot speak on experience on that, but I can certainly speak of experience on the California Arts Council, and it has been fortunate.

MR. ROSS: In addition to the public funds the thing that exercises the people in my community, who might be called leaders in funding, is that every time a new group is established, it is those men or women who begin to show signs of anxiety that here is another group who is going to be banging away at their door for funds. Now, therefore, the competition for private funding in the community is probably even more an acute question with the continual efflorescence of groups forming.

MODERATOR: Is there any need at all for new facilities?

MR. DonAROMA: Yes.

MR. HUARTE: I would certainly say so in the lower income areas. For example, the theater touring companies that wish to address themselves to the Mexican-American Community do it in high school gymnasiums, they do it on park benches, because there are no real theaters in the locale. Even the high schools have hardly decent facilities in the lower income areas. Beverly Hills High has an incredible theater program and theater, obviously, you know, whereas Lincoln High School in East Los Angeles, a large center of Mexican population, does not have nearly the same facilities. I would say there should be facilities in those areas. I don't know about other areas.

MR. DonAROMA: In the commercial field, in the field of theater availability in the County of Los Angeles, it is, on a scale of one to ten, I would say at one.

MR. HUARTE: Really.

MR. DonAROMA: Oh, yes, really, because demand is that high right now.

MR. BALLET: Really?

MR. DonAROMA: They can't find space. Every nook and cranny in the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, at the present time is filled, because we have these complaints, strong complaints from all phases of the industry, starting from the major networks, television

Networks, down to the smallest off theater making that demand for space.

MR. BALLET: Multi-use space, the kind that you described before, television and --

MR. DonAROMA: They have independent visual aid companies, you have independent videotape companies, you have independent film companies occupying all the space. I mean it.

MR. BALLET: Is that true in all the city?

MR. DonAROMA: Yes.

MR. BALLET: I never noticed any great need for space. I may be one of those people, forgive me, that really doesn't think you need a theater to make theater. You can do it anywhere, if it's good. It is nice to have good space, you know, nice flies and all of that, we appreciate it. I guess I just don't pay any attention to that. It seems to me on my priority list quite a ways down, to be truthful. I would go along with the salaries of the artists way ahead of that.

Then I do think what Harold Clurman said to me many years ago, when he described in this country an edifice complex, we build buildings and don't have anything to put in them, and that has been the case, less so recently.

MR. ROSS: We have been running a touring program out of our own facility in somewhere between five and three states for three years, and I have some numbers, if any body needs numbers, but this works upon the basis of working with the Western Arts Federation, plus the Arts Council like in the State of Washington. It started out some years ago being something, as you described, playing in halls that had to be cleared for lunch, and so on; but in the last three years we have partly, as a consequence of the Western States Arts Federation, been able to develop sponsors in the regions. We now have a situation whereby one of our main productions, entirely as is, including the cast, goes on tour and we have toured as far as Salt Lake City and Reno, and it has been sort of like four cities in the first year, with a total attendance of 32,000, of which that was 24,000 were students, with an adult attendance of 7,000; and then 11 cities with an attendance of 53,000, with 41,000 students and 12,000 adults; and 11 cities, plus going to Alaska, of 75,000 total attendance, and adults 9,000. So we are now at a kind of somewhat holding pattern.

We have two components in that touring. One is that main stage production which goes out and therefore has to go to the theaters or buildings which can in fact support a production from our main stage. When you see our main stage is 50 feet across, it's a pretty big production. Touring that through the passes in January and February out to Salt Lake has been quite something. In addition we also take another group that travels with the main group, that then radiates out from that hub city, where you go from where we go for three days and four days, and they go out on a radius

of about 50 miles with a show which is in fact designed specifically to operate, say, in junior high schools and lasts an hour, and that is highly improvisatory and highly physical and especially scripted and so on. We do feel it would be nice if the facilities into which we go were better especially when you get out in the hinterlands, which seems to me to be one of the places we really have to address ourselves in the future of the American theater. The coastal cities or strips seem to me fairly well developed, but we have large thousands of miles of touring that nobody gets near very much, apart from when Guthrie tours and ACT tours and we tour, you know, but when you take a look in fact at what that in fact does, it is still pretty sparse in terms of the whole country.

MR. BALLET: Facilities? A question? Does "facilities" mean a building? Is that what we are talking about? I don't know.

MR. ROSS: Yes, because you see one of the interesting questions that comes out of this touring of the hinterlands is the people in Pocatello do not want a scaled down, recast version of THE MATCHMAKERS from the Seattle Repertory. They want the cast that was on the Seattle Repertory stage with the scenery that was on the Repertory stage, and they have a right to expect it, but this makes a considerable demand upon the facility, and to me they could be improved.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I would just like to say that of course there was that period of 15 years ago when it seemed there were so many theaters being built that Clurman did make that reference to the edifice complex, and it seemed how in the world which of these theaters would ever be filled? What it turns out, they are all filled, and if anything, it has proven, certainly here in Los Angeles, that new theaters have created new audiences, and handsome new theaters just bring people into them, and consequently I think the building of a theater is very important.

MR. DonAROMA: Let me expand on that. For example, the Chinese Theater was built originally as a hell of a legitimate theater where the counterweights are unbelievable in that house. Now it is a movie house. The counterweights are dead. The facilities, as far as theaters in a town, you are talking about the facility for legitimate theater, you are talking about a counterweight system, as you were mentioning a minute ago to bring in MATCHMAKER from New York, it comes into Podunk, they expect the same thing. They can't get the same thing, because the facility cannot accommodate the change, the turntable effect, the counterweight system, the housing, the seating. The seating is important as far as bringing that type of show in. That's not going to work the same as it did in one of your larger houses in New York in a small city in the Midwest somewhere, because they don't have it. They have converted a lot of these into motion picture houses or wiped them out completely.

MR. ROSS: In some cases we have to send our technical staff and build extensions to the stages and kind of store them until they come back.

MR. DonAROMA: Now comes in the cost, building extensions.

MODERATOR: Do you believe there has been an increase in corporate support to theater, and do you see that as a source?

MR. EICHELBAUM: I am amazed, but I do think the corporations have finally been drawn into this thing. In San Francisco Standard Oil kicked in $50,000 for the production of "A CHRISTMAS CAROL" which surprised us all, and is rather heartening. I would like to state something about the Performing Arts Service. It seems to me a kind of marvelous system that was worked out by the Theater Development Fund, and it exists now in five cities and is about to start up in San Francisco. I feel very supportive toward it. It is a discount ticket system -- a voucher system. It seems to me to be a kind of nice, very fair sharing of subsidy, the subsidy coming from private and public sources. It is a system that most non-profit theaters can participate in by the selling of tickets at a discount, and it is a needed subsidy, and the advantage of it, say, from the corporate viewpoint, is that the corporations don't know who to give their money to. They're ignorant about the arts, and they can give it to this organization and know that their money will be divided among the various groups. And the disadvantage of the system is that, say, in a city like San Francisco, the opera, the symphony, the ballet and ACT participated in this thing, plus every smaller theater around will quite obviously draw audiences who will prefer going to ACT, prefer going to the opera, prefer going to the symphony; consequently, it is awfully hard not to keep the money from the larger groups, but at least it is a step in the right direction.

From what I understand, the small groups can participate in it, and audiences can come to their theater and they can get a dollar discount for a ticket, and it will kind of lure audiences, attract audiences, and the theater does profit from it, and you build up larger audiences. I think it is a good system.

MR. BALLET: I do, too. We do it in Minneapolis and it works beautifully. There are over 58 participating groups. I think it kind of evens itself out. They find themselves with vouchers, "Well, we've been there, let's take a chance." They are more likely to take a chance on a small group with the voucher than without it, so I hope that's true.

Can I say something about the private support sector? I think Stanley hit upon it. It is true, that private industry, which is what we are really talking about, tend to be a little skittish about giving money to specific things in the theater, like to the production of a play, unless it's like A CHRISTMAS CAROL, for which nobody can be against, or even to the support of an unknown quantity, if you know what I mean. They much prefer giving to organizations such as TDF, which I am all for. I am just trying to say, I am wondering if we can count on private industry supporting the arts in general, let alone the theater, the most controversial of all arts, because you can see it. You may have a very controversial painting, but most of those industrialists don't know it is controversial.

MR. ROSS: It doesn't talk.

MR. BALLET: It doesn't talk, but the theater endlessly does, so they don't like what it says. Mr. Ford himself was furious at the Ford Foundation for supporting what he said essentially were groups attacking the system. So I guess what I am trying to get around to saying is that the private support has always been limited unless those industries are ready to hire personnel to make commitments and judgments, and that I would extend even to the foundations. I think there is a great lack in the major foundations.

MR. ROSS: You don't have to name them.

MR. BALLET: Well, Ford, Rockefeller, Mellon, there are several others, smaller ones, but what they don't have, really, and I hope I am not offending anyone, are experts who are committed, know exactly what they are dealing with in each art form, and are given the wherewithal to go ahead and make a commitment, their commitment. If the board of directors of Ford Foundation doesn't like to support the Seattle Repertory, then they fire that guy who is giving support to the Seattle Repertory. What I am getting back to is a number of years ago a gentleman named Mac Lowry made that kind of commitment, and in large measure, the American Regional Theater is the result of that. I actually think he did it in ballet, he did it in theater. I find most of the foundations -- I almost want to say all -- and almost all of the private industrial supporters are terribly skittish, terribly afraid of making a commitment in the very time when we need daring commitment, by appointing people on their staffs who are willing to make those kinds of commitments, is what I hope they will do.

I think the federal government by the National Endowment system, which has experts administering those various programs, has set up the model and that is what the theater program is. It has an expert. The dance program has an expert. That is exactly what is happening, and I would hope that they would push that.

MR. ROSS: Also, if you use the term "acting," the Endowment would give the good housekeeping seal, you know, give some small group somewhere a thousand dollars. The fact that the NEA has put their housekeeping seal on it means that group can probably generate three or four times that amount back home, which they couldn't do before, because the NEA has said that. Therefore you can go to an individual businessman or to a corporation, or something, and say, "Look, somebody out there thinks we are valuable," and that is one, I think probably one of the most important things that the NEA does overall. I would like to put my two cents in about the corporate contribution to the arts. I have read all kinds of incredible numbers, like going from $20,000,000 to $200,000,000, but I think that some of that is somewhat spurious insofar as it includes all of that stuff that we get on those English imports on television, like UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Public television.

MR. ROSS: Yes, public television, which has essentially now become a discreetly advertising media.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Exxon and Mobil.

MR. ROSS: They are in back using a very discreet form of commercial, and that large sums of money which indeed the corporations like Mobil and Exxon have brought out have largely gone to those sorts of areas.

On the other hand, I would say that for the local corporations, I think that they have become aware of the arts in their areas as in Minneapolis and Seattle. We have again, to avoid that situation of the individual corporation being very worried about putting its money somewhere, it has started what amounts to a universal way which is run by the corporations, which is head by the major corporations which are based in Seattle, like Boeing and Weyerhauser, and so on, and they come in with a certain sum of money, and therefore have a tendency to be able to lean on others. It is the smaller corporations, however, which really don't come up with their fair shares.

My wife works for the Corporate Council for the Arts in Seattle. She comes home jubilant if she got $100 from a corporation, which has probably got capitalization of two or three millions. So there are those levels. The biggies are, I think, responsible now, but there is a whole area of people who don't really give a damn, don't give their fair shares any more than they do for the United Way.

MODERATOR: Is there any type of legislation you can think of that might have an effect of getting theater to where you have been saying you would like to see it.

MR. HUARTE: This is all just off the top of my head, but I am wondering in terms of allowance for contribution tax deductible. We are talking now about the not for profit professional theater, who are non-profit corporations and can apply to foundations and for the federal funding, for example, any aid for funds. Is there some way that private donors could get some sort of an advantage for donating their tax deductible donations to the arts? I'm probably not phrasing that properly.

MODERATOR: The corporate sector is allowed charitable giving up to five percent of their income before taxes.

MR. HUARTE: To any charity?

MODERATOR: To any charity.

MR. HUARTE: All right. Is there a way that one could give to the arts, you could give a little more, you know, in other words?

MR. BALLET: That wouldn't be taking away from medical research?

MR. HUARTE: Everyone wants to give to the hospitals and Red Cross and what have you, but they are loathe to give to the arts.

MR. BALLET: I would like to propose, since we are being outrageous, something that has often fascinated me. They are doing it in Ireland. They are saying if you are an artist, and I don't know how you decide that, you're given certain advantages. You don't have to pay taxes. Now, you are talking about Congress, which we are talking about possible Congressional action, I wonder if in a sense forgiving the artist his taxes, your man who is making $500 wouldn't be nearly as bad off if he didn't have to give a hunk of that to taxes; that in a sense that is a national recognition of that artist as a resource to the vitality of the country.

MR. ROSS: How would you restrict that so he doesn't get off taxes for being in a Western?

MR. BALLET: I think you can't

MR. ROSS: If he comes and works in the theater somewhere that --

MR. BALLET: Where he is undersubsidized, underpaid areas of the profession, where he is doing that particular kind of service --

MR. ROSS: Right.

MR. BALLET: -- that that money he does get at least is forgiven in terms of taxes. In Ireland, I guess everybody knows this is what they are trying in Ireland, it gets the poets and the playwrights and artists back, and they deliberately say, "You come here and live here, we forgive you your taxes." And it doesn't matter whether you are Harold Robbins making millions, or some little two-bit poet.

MR. ROSS That is why all those big hot-shot guys in Los Angeles are living in Ireland.

MR. HUARTE: I was going to say it is interesting there is already a swarm of subsidies for all the unemployed actors in Los Angeles through unemployment insurance, and in most cities, you know, many, especially in smaller companies, live off of unemployment which is very degrading, demoralizing, any form of welfare is very degrading, they should be working. They should be given a chance to work.

MR. ROSS: In fact, that is not always the case. For instance, there is in Seattle a very respectable non-Equity theater which pays such small sums of money, because it exists in a little loft, that the guys don't qualify for unemployment.

MR. HUARTE: That is another ball of wax in terms of welfare. We are asking for a subsidy, we are asking for a subsidy of the arts.

MR. BALLET: Consider the Ballet plan.

MR. ROSS: Yes, the Ballet plan is a good idea.

MR. ROSS: We are saying when an artist is clearly working in the area which might be designated as a service rather than a rake-off or rip-off --

MR. EICHELBAUM: Non-profit.

MR. ROSS: -- that kind of money, in other words, probably what should happen is that the organizations such as Minneapolis or the underground Chicano theater of so-and-so, would in fact get a designated status, and when you work for that group, they can stamp your whatever and that money doesn't get taxed. That is a very, very good idea.

MODERATOR: Is there anything that should be done for the commercial theater to encourage it or allow it to be more able to take risks?

MR. DonAROMA: Well, I would say as far as that is concerned, if a theater company goes into a theater and it costs the company $60,000 total to put on the production, and their income from tickets is, say, $55,000, then they could ask for the grant to pick up the tax, rather than the one individual writing it off taxwise.

MR. BALLET: You are saying this for the commercial theaters?

MR. DonAROMA: Yes. How would they do it?

MODERATOR: How would that answer the need of the producer in the commercial theater to return an investment to his investors?

MR. DonAROMA: He would do that by the cost of his return to the investors, that additional $10,000 would allow him to return it to the investor, and also the break, in other words, what he is doing is asking for $10,000 for the whole production, and then it is presented to the public, theater is brought to the public, and it's done by them breaking even. To underwrite an investment.

MR. ROSS: I find some difficulties with that. There are all kinds of difficulties I have. In the first place, I don't think what one might call the commercial theater or I call it the profit distributing theater, has not in fact taken some of the steps it might have done to guard against some of the situations it finds itself. For instance, theaters like most of the loft theaters across the country have developed over the years a subscription campaign, so in my particular case I am now totally proof against the critics. The critics can make no effect on my theater whatsoever, because I have sold 95 percent of the seats before I open the doors. If I don't go on satisfying my customers, the customers will stay away, and any year that my product doesn't come up to scratch, I see a pretty sharp drop off immediately of 10, 15 or 20 percent of that subscription. I do not see why, for instance, in New York those theaters that are there couldn't come up with something like 80,000 people in what, a city of two million, people living, you know, people living in the environs? 80,000 people who could in fact work a series. I don't really think that those managements have really tried to put that together. So that you would in fact have a month

or two months of plays before you ever got to the problem of what does the New York Times say, then you got maybe two months of word of mouth.

I have developed my subscription from 7,500 seven years ago to 23,000, 25,000, purely basically on word of mouth, because the critics have been just as tough with me as they are with anybody else. I don't see why theaters, commercial theaters, can't band together and create a series and do things for themselves that way. I also don't see why -- I may be getting on to rough ground -- why it is necessary for a musical in which we participated and which went to New York, which folded, but that is neither here nor there, why nearly twice as many musicians are required in that theater than were actually playing. I mean, there are all kinds of things that I think you got to look at first before you start talking about providing public money to offset investors' risks.

MR. DonAROMA: He is talking about minimum crews. That is what you are talking about, the house requires a minimum crew, whereas we require a minimum crew in a house which is the head of a department for each department that's activated.

MR. ROSS: That is what I have in my theater. I have that in Seattle.

MR. DonAROMA: You have that, and there is no way I can see that that your theater, not even knowing what your theater is there, that there is no way that your theater would be a department not activated. Impossible, because there is no time you would go without using sound, there is no time you would go without using scenery, and there is no time you would go without using lights.

MR. ROSS: We have five men, and we have five department heads, which are unionized, and we have another five that work in our shop work who are unionized.

MR. DonAROMA: Yes.

MR. ROSS: I have no objection to that. What I'm concerned with --

MR. DonAROMA: Yes, what you are talking about, when it calls for a 12 man orchestra, you're stuck with a 17.

MR. ROSS: You know, 24.

MR. DonAROMA: This is what you are talking about, the guy that has to play down in the men's room for the night.

MR. ROSS: Right.

MR. BALLET: I have another piece of legislation to propose. I am good at proposing legislation. I want to say to the commercial, profit-making theaters, that if it would plow up to, I would say, 50 percent of its profits back into the industry, as we have defined it in this room today,

that that would be tax forgivable, that would be research and development for the commercial theater.

MR. DonAROMA: Let me ask a question. How would you say that if a performance were paying $500 a week is forgiven for its taxes that that would go back into the theater?

MR. BALLET: No, no, wait. The very commercial theater --

MR. DonAROMA: The commercial theater.

MR. BALLET: -- the commercial theater, in other words, once a producer -- I am not talking about the artists now at all, they get salaries, the people that get salaries are not protected, the producer starts making money, if they would be allowed to give up to 50 percent back to research and development in their own industry, without there being a tax, if they don't have to take it out of their own hides, I'd force them to be generous. That's what I would do at this point. Isn't it marvelous what legislation I am coming up with at this point?

MR. HUARTE: I was just commenting it sounded very good.

MR. DonAROMA: The twenty thousand is now down to fifteen.

MR. EICHELBAUM: I think if it were summarized, I think there were two suggestions made here, generally. One was the certain tax advantages to the arts, and more than there are now, and the other would be more subsidies to the arts. I guess that's about it.

MR. ROSS: I have a whole bunch of things. One of the things, I think, that really has to be addressed in this question is National Endowment policy, about the ceiling, which I think is $150,000. I think this is unsatisfactory insofar as it is a ceiling across, as far as I understand, all the arts, and I think that there is without doubt a good case to be made that the theater is one of the lower members on the totem pole in terms of its establishment in communities. In other words, what I have gathered, usually, first of all the community establishes a museum, then it gets a symphony, and then it may get either an opera or ballet; but in some cases, the ballet is, in fact, lower on the totem pole than the theater, but the theater comes lower down. So that in many cases, I think Seattle is probably typical of this as anywhere else. Symphony has endowments, higher sustaining funds, because they have been going for 25 years, 30 years, or whatever, and that therefore, to say that the funding level for all the arts should be the same is unrealistic.

I also think that we are in a situation now which is somewhat ironic insofar as the major companies like ACT or Minneapolis or the Mark Taper, have arrived at that ceiling and have been marking time over several years in an inflationary situation so that in fact the amount of money that they can receive has in real terms been descreasing by as much as, I suspect, 25 to 30 percent, whereas groups such as my own and others have been responded to as we have developed in scope, and therefore there is now

a serious inequity between the large companies and what might be called the middle or the secondary group of which I am -- I think ours is kind of one of the leaders. We now have a $144,000 grant from the National Endowment, which is really, you know, nearly up to the ACT, and the ACT budget is twice or three times what our budget is.

MR. EICHELBAUM: Four million.

MR. ROSS: Twice or three times what our budget is. Arguments are made because those budgets are of that size, now, therefore, the grants from the National Endowment are less important to them, but I don't really believe that is true. I find it disconcerting that ACT had to get rid of a very fine voice teacher because they couldn't come up with an additional $15,000. So that is one question that I really think we should address, the question of ceilings as an overall across the board fact is really unrealistic. I feel very strongly that we have to develop a service to the hinterlands more than we have done. I feel that something should be done in the development of our artistic directors, being in a situation where I am, quite frankly, looking for an heir in the next few years, I find it very difficult to find those people, because they are not being trained. There has been a very successful training program for managers, but nobody has really seriously settled down to work out what is the training for an artistic director, which has got to include business training as well as esthetic training, and so on. I also am deeply concerned that we don't have a focus in our structure nationally, by which I mean that we have developed with incredible rapidity over the last 10 or 12 years training programs for the actor, which have, in my opinion, become as good as any in Europe. This has been with the help of the National Endowment, and they have put themselves together under the League of Training Programs and policed their standards very vigorously.

We have regional theaters which work with those training programs so that the young, outstanding talent does find a way into the theater for his work and for his development, so that a young actor like Mark Singer, who was trained in the Washington University, then came to me, went on and became an outstanding member of ACT, but where in European countries he would now automatically be in the capital working regularly in plays as well as in movies, he is like so many of us now in Los Angeles kicking around trying to get himself a series, and the ultimate goal of that young talent is to get a series. It has a name. It's name is called money, so you can do what you like later. That's the theory, but in fact when you get late, late, you don't. So that when I call people now who are outstanding and say, "Do you want to play CYRANO DE BERGERAC?" and then there is an agonizing three-minute conversation at the other end, and then they say, "He can't, because he got himself a contract." And the other thing I am concerned about also in terms of that focuses the fact that when Guilgud and Richardson left NO MAN'S LAND, the New York Times said, "Why couldn't that play continue with American actors taking over those roles?" and mentioned Joe Summers, and I think it was Mahar. Joe Summers is an octor that has come up through the regional theater and is now making his way somewhere on Broadway. Why do we still have to keep importing those actors from England who have in fact come through an organization

like we have, but in addition to which they have a focus in their metroplis, or somewhere, and those things concern me. I think we should try to do something about it.

And lastly, if I may say so, is there nothing that can be done to develop responsible and supportive and rigorous criticism? The criticism in the regional theaters, in the regional cities, is in most cases appalling. I don't need to go into it, we all know the SKY FROM THE FOLSTEAD gets passed over, and it's just awful. I am this year, for example, having to cut back on one of my theaters which was doing avant-garde work simply because the critics were incapable of seeing what it was about, and therefore proceeded to do it in.

MR. BALLET: I am trying to go through some of this very quickly. While this is still hot on the skittle, I would also say that we need to develop what I call literary managers for theaters, as well as artistic directors, and I don't think they are quite the same thing at all. We just simply ignore that year after year. I would reiterate that we need definitely a living wage for the serious professional artist, and that covers it, I hope.

I would suggest that we need much more daring moves that would explore what I would call radical aids for the arts, such as the kinds of tax relief for the playwright, to the artist, I feel that the playwrights fell in that. We need radical tax relief for the artist and to those who give from within the industry, which is what I call research and development. I think we all ought to start talking about it that way, because I think Congress people understand research and development. They don't really understand what we are talking about when we talk about anything else.

I also would like, and we didn't have time, I hoped we would, that somewhere along the way this project can address itself to the individual artist's needs as opposed to the institution's needs. We devoted all three hours primarily not to the playwright, but really with the institution, institutionalized theater. There are many artists who are not institution oriented or connected. May I just give you one simple example, just a tiny one, it doesn't take a lot of money, but takes money -- a system of duplicating scripts so that if the playwright, no matter how bad it is, makes no judgments necessary, if he wrote a play, the script is duplicated for him as a service. He needs that duplicated, make 25 copies. It is simply, some playwrights cannot afford to go Instant Print to get it done, and I tremble to think that maybe some great play is lost because we didn't have the script duplicated in a society as highly technical as we are. That is a very simple need for the individual artist to have. One. I could go on to dozens. I don't want to take a lot of time giving all the kinds of things we could use for the individual artist. I cut myself short for once.

MR. ROSS: All those fringe benefits that are really not available.

MR. HUARTE: It seems that there is very little left, so not to be redundant, I agree with everything that has been said; but I still must speak strongly to making theater available to all sectors of society, particularly commercial, good professional theater. I don't believe it is

available, as we discussed earlier some of the reasons for attempting that. I think of the importance of a subsidy overall, we have got to subsidize the arts in this society.

MR. DonAROMA: Well, the money that it takes to direct and promote, whatever money it takes to direct and promote the interest of children, children's theater, because the youth of today are the theater goers of tomorrow, simply. I feel the facilities throughout the country should be by the government some way set up to direct the training of all phases of the industry, from the stagehand right -- I should say from the playwright, the root, to the finished product all the way through. But I am saying that it has not been in the colleges now, but it is, it is done in colleges as a class. I'm saying with the facilities set for the full function of theater from its onset to its closing of production, all the way through, every phase of the industry be taught at that facility, and the interest again paid to bring the children into the theater and have them understand what theater is.

By the same token, I feel as though the commercial theater, and there are people in the commercial theater who couldn't care less what is in the theater, they don't, the talent or anything else involved in it is strictly a business with them. I am talking about the interest in theater because of its talent, because of what it can bring to children, the education it can give to the child, should be made available to the children today, and the training of every phase, right down to the ticket taker, that interest in that facility should be made available so that every person, every person that is involved in theater today, whether they be considered a skilled labor or a talent, in order to produce educational theater as well as every other type of theater to the American child and to the person that wants to go into that theater, this should be made available to them.